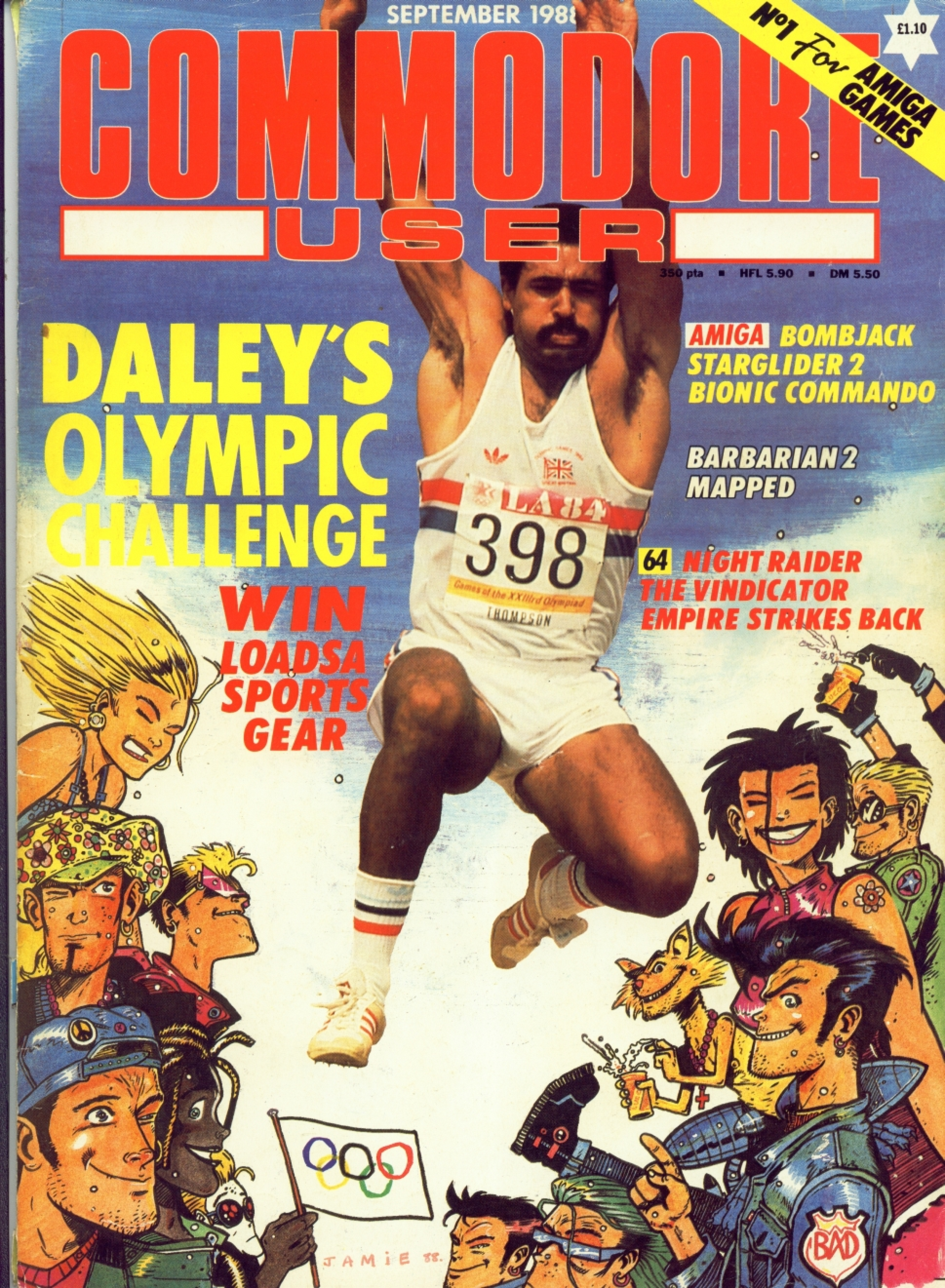
SEPTEMBER 1988

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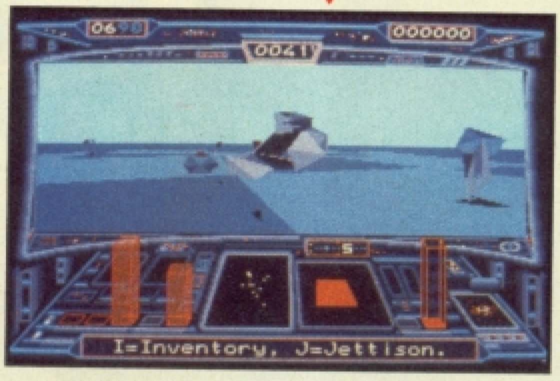
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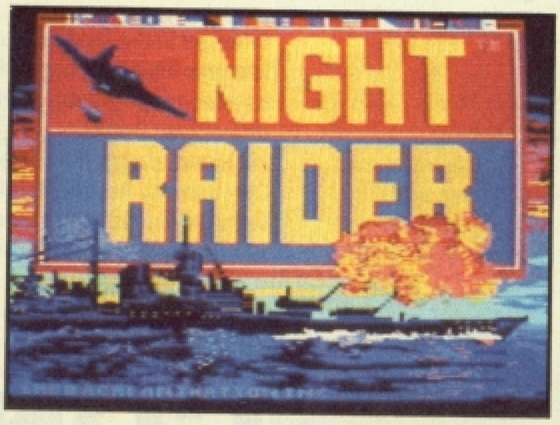
SPECIALS



Starglider II



Night Raider



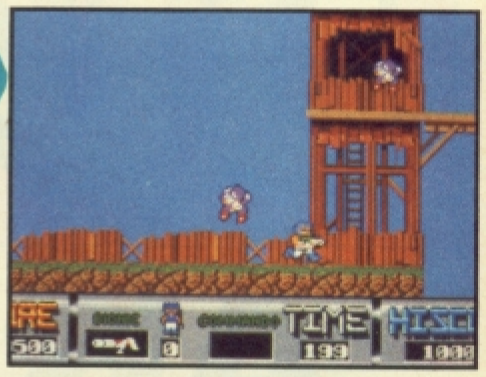
Editor — Mike Pattenden; Staff Writer — Nick Kelly; Art Editor — Elaine Bishop; Advertising Manager — Nigel Taylor; Dep Ad Manager — Tom Glenister; Classified/Copy Control — Angela Smart; Publisher — Terry Pratt; Editorial/Advertising — 01-251 6222; Distribution — EMAP Frontline Limited, 1 Lincoln Court, Lincoln Road, Peterborough PE1 2RP Tel: 0733 555161; Back Issues — PO Box 500, Leicester, LE99 0AA; Subscriptions — PO Box 500, Leicester LE99 0AA Tel: 0858 410510; Annual Subs. (UK) £15; Europe — £24; World — £38. Registered Offices: Priory Court 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. ISS 0265-721X.

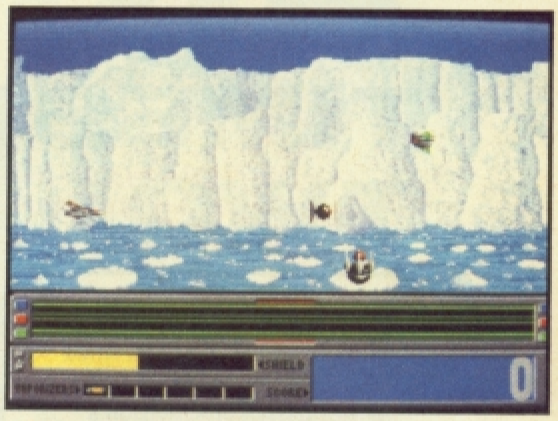
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ABC
MEMBER OF THE AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS
69,004
Jan-June 1988

REVIEWS

Bionic Commando





Star-Ray

19-Boot Camp



BUZZ

SOFTCO TRIAD ANNOUNCED

In an unprecedented deal between three major competing software houses, Psygnosis, Telecomsoft and Mirrorsoft have announced their intentions of pooling their considerable resources to work together on a number of projects in the future. The first product of this most unusual union, which is to be known as Triad, will be a three-game Amiga compilation due for release in October. Psygnosis are to contribute *Barbarian*, Telecomsoft will be supplying *Starglider* and Mirrorsoft's offering will be *Defender Of The Crown*.

Acting Triad spokesman Sean Brennan was keen to point out to Buzz that the union will definitely *not* be limited to the pooling of back catalogue games for compilations and stated that many of Triad's future plans will involve the three labels' development teams co-operating on what he described as "a lot of original-type projects".

ARNIE TIMES TWO



Muscle-bound hulk and macho screen star Arnie Schwarzenegger, who starred in Activision's *Predator* earlier this year, is to appear on your monitors twice more. Not one but two forthcoming Arnie films have been signed up by fast-moving software houses.

Grand Slam have recently acquired the rights to produce a conversion of *The Running Man*, in which Arnie plays Ben Richards, a convict-turned-contestant in a deadly futuristic game show in which prisoners get to race through burnt-out sections of Los Angeles whilst being chased by a specially-selected group of super athletes who are trained to kill the contestants for the enjoyment of a brutalised TV audience. Survival earns the contestants not toasters or hi-fi's but remissions of their sentences. *The Running Man* is due for a nationwide release on the silver screen in late September, and Grand Slam aim to have their officially licensed game in the shops by March 1989 to coincide with the film's release on video.

Meanwhile, film-conversion specialists Ocean have acquired rights to another Schwarzenegger biggie which has only just been released in the States. *Red Heat* features an intriguing partnership between top-ranking Soviet police officer Ivan Denko (Schwarzenegger) and deadbeat Chicago cop Art Ridzik (played by James Belushi) who are forced to work together to track down a vicious Russian murderer and drug-smuggler who has fled from Moscow to the Windy City to escape justice. This rather unusual 'buddy' movie will be opening over here in January, but Ocean have not yet confirmed a release date for their licence.



CONCORDE COMPO

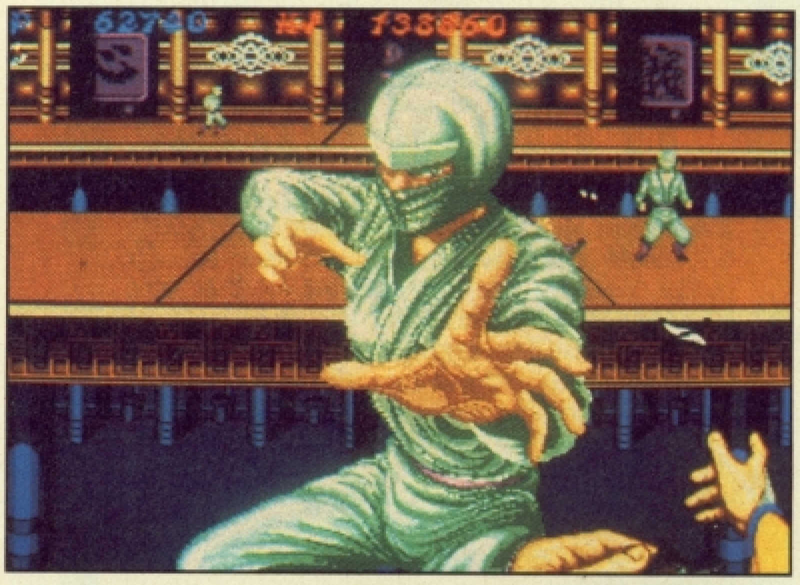
Word reaches us that Mirrorsoft offshoot Image Works have come up with a novel means of promoting their first release, the combat flight sim *Sky Chase*. Purchasers of the game will find — along with the free poster, combat training manual and aircraft documentation — an entry form for a competition, the prize for which will be a trip for two lucky devils out over the Atlantic in the luxurious supersonic jetliner Concorde. A must for all sonic boom boys and girls, wethinks.



FIL COIN-OP SPLURGE

French Software house FIL have just given emphatic notice that they'll be competing with the major UK-based software houses over the coming year with the annoucement of TEN major coin-op signings. The French company have acquired conversion rights for Taito's brill 3D driving game *Continental Circus*, and it seems likely that this product, along with their already announced conversion of Sega's excellent martial arts shoot 'em up *Shinobi* (pictured below), will confirm FIL as a force to be reckoned with in coin-op conversion. The other titles that they've acquired are *Ninja Warriors* (Taito), *Silkworm* and *Gemini Wings* (both Tecmo), *Time Soldiers*, *Heavy Barrel*, *Kid Niki* and *Paddle Mania* (all SNK), and *Vigilante* (Irem). And in addition to the undisclosed, but obviously sizeable sums they've laid out in acquiring all these licences, FIL have apparently budgeted a staggering £2million for development and marketing of the titles.

According to FIL's UK representatives The Sales Curve, the intention is that the first of these conversions will hit the shelves in early 1988, and there should be two of 'em released each



CALLING INTERNATIONAL RESCUE

Fans of Brains, Virgil, Scott, Lady Penelope and the rest of those loveable heroes from the super-camp '60's space-puppet show Thunderbirds will be, erm, over the moon to hear that they are shortly to star in a home computer game, courtesy of Grand Slam. Those with longish memories will recall that Thunderbirds has already made an appearance on the 64 a couple of years back, on the Silverbird label. The good folk at Grand Slam feel, however, that this initial forray by our hinge-limbed heroes into the wacky world of computer games was not all it should have been, and, no doubt inspired by the current revival of interest in all things Sixties, they've decided to bring out their own brand-new 'Birdy game. *Thunderbirds* the game will be with you in January '89. F-A-B, Virgil!

FIGHT SEXISM

Men and women who feel that sexism in the computer industry has gone too far will be interested to hear of a new group being set up to combat the demeaning portrayal of women in computer games and advertising. Organiser Sandra Vogel feels that because of the (inaccurate) assumption that only men use computers, women's interests aren't being represented and she finds some recent computer game advertising campaigns particularly offensive.

If you'd like to know more about the group write to Sandra, enclosing an SAE, at 3 Alden Court, Stanley Road, Wimbledon, London SW19.

MEDIAGENIC GRAB GALAXY FORCE



Just weeks after *Galaxy Force*, Sega's latest and most expensive sit-into coin-op, was first shown in Europe, Mediagenic/Activision have announced their acquisition of the conversion rights. And in addition to snapping up the obvious arcade successor to *Afterburner*, they've also signed four more Sega games for conversion: *Altered Beast*, *Hot Rod*, *Sonic Boom* and *Ace Attacker*. These titles won't be appearing until some time in the New Year.

There must be some loose change rattling around in Mediagenic's coffers because they've also announced that November will see, for the first-time ever, prime time TV advertising for computer games. The Mediagenic games in question are *SDI*, *R-Type* and their Christmas biggie *Afterburner*.

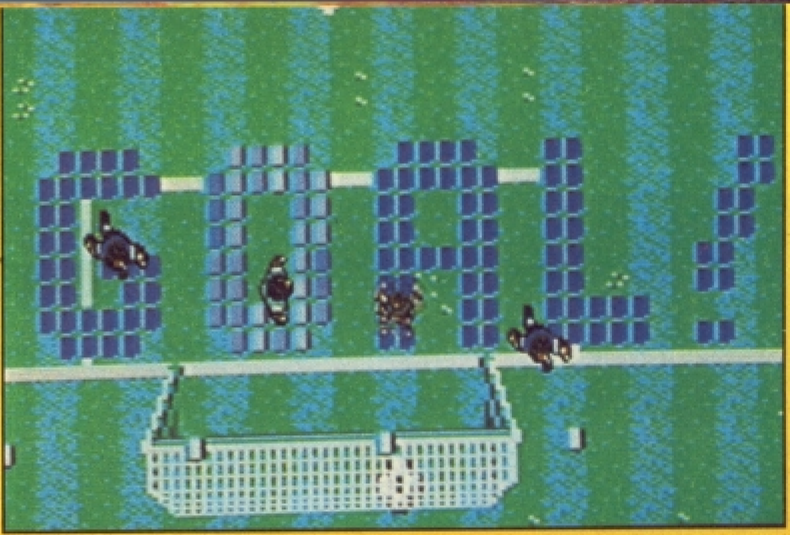


BRUCE MOONLIGHTS ON COMPUTER

Bruce Willis, the laconic private detective star of TV's "Moonlighting" is due to make his debut appearance on the 64 and Amiga next year. This has come about through the efforts of Mediagenic who've just signed up the conversion rights to the fourthcoming film "Die Hard" which stars Bruce as a New York City detective John McClane who becomes the only hope for a group of hostages when he, and they, are trapped in a high-rise office building in Los Angeles on Christmas Eve by a group of terrorists. "Die Hard" should be showing in these parts round about Christmastime, and Mediagenic's game will appear some time in the New Year.

BUZZ

BUZZ



MICROSOCCER

Much-heralded by CU, Sensible Software's new soccer game should be with you in time for the PC Show. They may have slightly dodgy haircuts and seriously warped musical "tastes", but these boys shore can knock out a brill piece of software, and we don't expect this'll be any different. With a choice of sixteen teams, variable weather conditions, a wide range of kicking and tackling skills (including, we're pleased to see, a banana kick), one-player, two-player or multi-player options and a stirring soundtrack from recent signing Martin Galway, this looks like it might well become *the* footie game. And just in time for the new season too, Brian.



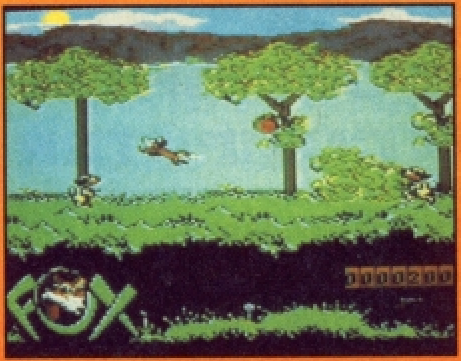
TERRORPODS

Released by Psygnosis on 16-bit towards the end of last year, *Terrorpods* will shortly be made available to 64 owners too. It seats you in the cockpit of a Defence Strategy Vehicle cruising the dark side of the planet Colian, trying to prevent the evil Empire from removing all the planets' mineral wealth, discovering just how their Terrorpods are constructed and obtaining the means to destroy them. There's plenty of blasting involved but lots of strategy, trading and tactics too. Out shortly, *Terrorpods* will strain your brain as well as your trigger finger.



OVERLANDER

Yet another drive'n'blast game, and one which has caused a veritable Gulf war of threats and accusations between publishers Elite and US Gold who've just brought us *Roadblasters, Overlander* will be screaming your way any day now. For the record, it's set in the ozone-less 2025, when the earth's population are paying the price for their reliance upon aerosols in the latter half of the twentieth century by being condemned to live in the bowels of the earth to avoid radiation sickness. All except the mercenary Overlanders, the men who make the danger-fraught journeys from settlement to settlement via a network of overground highways. Each mission you choose pits you against an army of irate and mutant surface dwellers. Still, it's better than mouldering about underground. Makes you think before you apply that underarm de-ponger, eh?



FOXX FIGHTS BACK

Shortly to appear from Mirrorsoft's newly-launched Image Works label, *Foxx Fights Back* looks like the perfect gift for any 64-owning hunt saboteurs. You play Mr Foxx, a much set-upon member of the vulpine classes who's had enough of being chased and harried and decides to fight fire with fire — or perhaps more accurately, to fight predator with machine gun. More of a morality play than a factual representation of life in the great outdoors, really, especially as the squirrels pelt Foxx with nuts, the badgers lob rocks at him and the beagles attempt to mow him down on their bikes! Surreal, or what?

SAVAGE

November will see the release by Firebird of the latest probe Software product, *Savage*. In this massive game which features four major multi-loads, you play the loin-clothed Savage himself for the first two levels, in which he hacks and blasts his horizontally-scrolling way out of his alien-controlled dungeon cell then battles his way through the *Space Harrier*-esque Death Valley respectively. In the third level Savage, perhaps being stronger in the brawn than the brains department, realises that what with all this excitement he's left his fair maiden friend to be duffed up back in the castle and sends his mate, the fire-spitting eagle (you again) to rescue her. Sounds like a cross between *Hawkeye*, the aforementioned *Space Harrier* and *Vulcan Venture* to us, which can't be bad.



NEUROMANCER

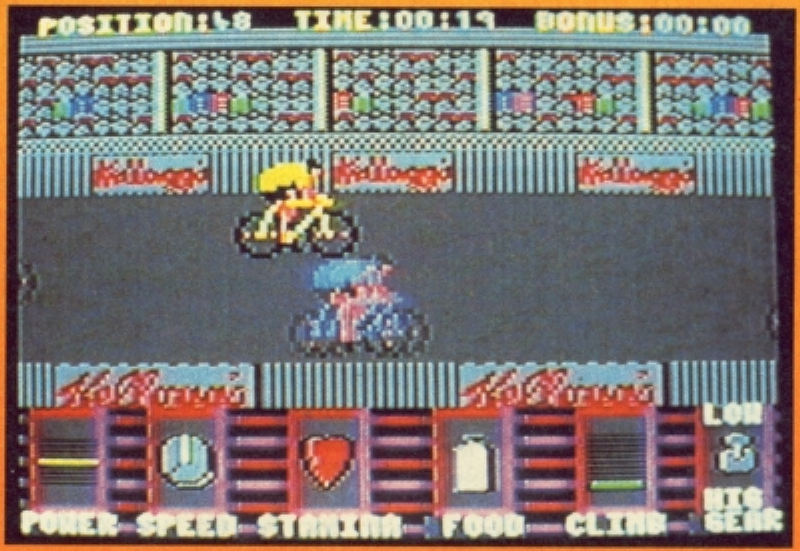
No, nothing whatsoever to do with the hateful New Romantic movement of a couple of years back which saw every nobhead from Land's End to John O'Groats kitting themselves out in jodhpurs and silky shirts. In fact, *Neuromancer*, from Interplay/Electronic Arts, is based upon a soon-to-be-released-as-a-film novel by that ace sci-fi scribbler William Gibson (acknowledged as the founder of Cyberpunk) and puts you in the shoes of a hacker in 21st century Japan, a society completely controlled by a vast computer system. Your task is to gain control of the world by acquiring the best software and information and breaking into the right databases. And if that wasn't enough to make you rush out and buy *Neuromancer* on its release this October, there's a digitised soundtrack by those wacky straitjackets ("Are We Not Men?"), Devo.





SDI

Not massively successful in the arcades, Sega's *SDI*, did however have the benefit of controversy. Now you'll have the chance to check out Star Wars in your front room. Divided into an offensive and a defensive phase, you use your very own Strategic Defence System to take enemy missiles out before they can reduce the free world to a smouldering pile of radioactive rubble in both outer space and over the surface of your country. The arcade version used rollerball controls *a la Missile Command* so it'll be interesting to see how Activision cope with the gameplay for the 64. *SDI* should be out in October.



KELLOGG'S TOUR

To celebrate cornflake kings Kellogg's massive sponsorship of a cycling tour of Britain, CRL are bringing out a bike sim which will allow you to fight it out for yellow and green jerseys the length and breadth of this green and pleasant land. With 678 miles of road to cover, including bonuses for arduous mountain stages and sprint tests, you'll have to keep your eyes on your speed, power, stamina, food — and, of course, the road. The route takes you from Newcastle, through Manchester, Liverpool, Stoke, Birmingham and Bristol (home of the Moose). You should be able to get saddle sore any day now.

PC SHOW 88



Check out the Super X Prokon simulator on the Microprose stand.

That time of year is almost upon us again: the time when normally sane, decent people go crazy, eat too much, drink too much and generally get very loud. Yes, folks — it's the Personal Computer Show at Earls Court.

Successor to the Personal Computer World Show, the newly-named PC Show has also changed its location. All those wishing to take part in the fun and excitement of Britain's premier computer exhibition should now take the tube to the Earls Court station (which is on both the District and Piccadilly lines), or to the West Brompton station (on the District line only). If you're arriving by car, you should take the main M4 route into London from which it will be well signposted; there's plenty of car parking space at Earls Court itself and in surrounding car parks.

So just what's going on? At very little expense, Steve Jarratt indulged in a little investigative journalism to find out what's in store...

GRANDSLAM:

● Grandslam have a whole bunch of up-and-coming titles lined up, including an official Thunderbirds game, *The Running Man*, which features the pixelated muscles of Arnold Schwarzenneger, the computer version of the board game Espionage, the conversion of *PacMania* plus a new Bruce Lee license, details of which have yet to be finalised.

HEWSON:

● Hewson are currently increasing their presence in the 16-bit market, so be prepared to find plenty of Amiga products on their stand. These include versions of *Zynaps, Cybernoid* and John Phillips' new game, *Eliminator*.

And on the 64 look out for *Cybernoid II* plus some new releases on the Rack-It budget lable, including a re-release of Thalamus' *Sanxion*, and *Uridium+* together with some new original games, *Scorpion*, a fast-moving horizontally scrolling maze-cum-shoot 'em up, and *Fifth Gear*, a vertically scrolling dodge and blast racing game.

LORICIELS:

● This is the first anniversary of Loriciels (UK) and the fifth anniversary of their French parent company, so it was decided to take a large, individual stand, alongside their publishers, Elite.

They will be unveiling their exclusive racing game based around the 944 Turbo Porsche which is driven by ex-winner of the Paris-Dakar rally, René Metge, and is sponsored by the company.

Other releases include *Space Racer* and *Eddie Edwards' Super Ski Challenge,* both for the 64 and Amiga (fans of the heroic failure may also get a chance to meet the megastar on the stand!).

MICROPOSE:

● Great supporters of the PC(W) show, Micropose always go for maximum impact. This year's attraction goes one better than last year's *Gunship* flight simulator: at great expense, they have imported a Super X Prokon simulator system. This totally enclosed and hydraulically supported capsule allows up to 14 people to view computer generated images while experiencing the accompanying motions, to create a believable sensation of movement. The graphics are provided by a million-dollar computer system.

Microprose expect to get through 3,412 people during the course of the show, so get in the queue early to guarantee a seat!

On the business side of things, Microprose and their subsidiary labels have several new titles on show. Microprose themselves have *Red Storm Rising,* based on the Tom Clancy novel, *Samurai* (which speaks for itself), a spy game called *Covert Action,* and Sensible Software's brilliant footballing game, *Microsoccer.*

Under the auspices of Microprose's 'Joint Ventures in Europe', Origin Systems and Cosmi are also being exhibited on their stand. The latest Origin products include *Ultima V* and *Times of Lore,* both fantasy role playing games, plus a sneak preview of *Space Rouge,* and *Prototank* which promises to be something special.

Cosmi also have several titles in the pipeline, featuring stock market action in *Inside Trader,* and the cut and thrust of business in *Corporate Raider.*

MIRRORSOFT:

● Mirrorsoft, distributors of Cinemaware, PSS and FTL products, will be previewing all the releases on their new label, Image Works. These include *Foxx Fights Back, Speedball* from the Bit-Map Brothers, and *Bomboozal,* a puzzle maze game which has had creative input from a whole range of programmers.

Cinemaware will be featuring the long-awaited *Rocket Ranger* (possibly with some 64 demos), *Lords of the Rising Sun,* based on Samuri warriors, and *TV Sports Football*, an American footballing simulator, all on the Amiga.

FTL will be unveiling the Amiga version of *Dungeon Master*, while PSS have the old eight-bit game *Theatre Europe* on the Amiga.

Mirrorsoft have also recently acquired the rights to Atari's *Blasteroids,* and there will be a few freeplay arcade machines around the stand, not to mention one or two 'interesting characters'...

NOVAGEN:

● Novagen will be launching

two new products from hitherto unknown software house, Quantum Design. The first of these is *X-Terminator* (reviewed this issue) and *Battle Island*, a complex *Commando* variant which multidirectionally scrolls over a playing area consisting of 400 screens!

On the 16-bit side, Novagen will be showing the all-but-completed *Damocles*, brainchild of *Mercenary* man Paul Woakes. Featuring solid 3D vector graphics and an explorable environment 50 times bigger than *Mercenary*, *Damocles* sounds like a must for all adventurous Amiga owners to watch out for.



The Bitmap Brothers

OCEAN:

● Continuing their success, Ocean's stand is to be three times bigger than the one they had last year. And the highlight for most visitors should be the Ferret armoured car sitting in the middle of it all to promote their big release, *Operation Wolf*.

Ocean have plenty of new titles on show, such as *Where Time Stood Still* and *Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge* for the Amiga. They are also previewing and promoting a whole series of forthcoming licenses: Robocop will probably be stomping around the stand, having a go on the 15 arcade machines which will be on freeplay. These include *Guerilla War* and *Victory Road*, for which Ocean have the conversion rights.

Also appearing will be *Rambo 3* in preview form, and a "rather special" new 3D vector graphic game for the Amiga.

PSYGNOSIS:

● Going in the opposite direction to everyone else, Psygnosis, who started out as 16-bit publishers, are now converting their products to the eight-bit machines! Their stand should feature demos of *Barbarian* on the 64 together with *Menace*.

The Amiga products include a graphical icon-driven adventure called *Chronquest*, together with previews of *Aquaventura, Cluster*, and a tentatively named *Timelord*.

Fans of Psygnosis' artwork should also get to their stand early because they're going to be selling Roger Dean posters at very reasonable rates.

TELECOMSOFT:

● Rainbird will be showing all their new ST titles, but since these will eventually be converted to the Amiga, interested parties should go along for a look anyway. Their latest catalogue features the latest text adventure from Magnetic Scrolls, called *Fish* (yes, well . . .) *Verminator*, a very smart looking arcade adventure, *S.T.A.R.*, a filled 3D vector graphic Elite look-a-like, plus the Salvador Dali-inspired *Weird Dream*.

The eight-bitters are still catered for with *Soldier of Fortune* from Firebird, a big arcade adventure shoot 'em up (something for everyone, there). Firebird also have *Savage* for the Amiga, which promises some impressive graphics as a lone combatant goes against the massed forces of some enemy or other.

Telecomsoft have also had some sweets specially made for the occasion, and these are being dished out as freebies during the course of the show. Those with a sweet tooth should get to their stand early to avoid disappointment!

THALAMUS:

● Newsfield-owned Thalamus will be having its normal place at the show next to its parent company, and have quite a range of up-and-coming products. The 64 is well supported as ever, with *Armalyte* from Cyberdyne Systems, a two player shoot 'em up in the mould of *Nemesis, R-Type* et al. There will also be a demo of the Boys Without Brains' new game *Bamboo*. Featuring a cute main character, the game is based on the *Ghosts 'n' Goblins/Wardner* style of play, and features some technically clever high-res scrolls, whatever that might mean.

Rob Stevens, formerly with Palace Software has joined Thalamus and is working on a filled (non vector) graphic shoot 'em up with strategic overtones which might well be on show.

Thalamus are also breaking into the 16-bit market with some Amiga products, including another vector graphic game, and a graphic adventure. The latter has a landscaping technique similar to *Lords of Midnight*, and boasts sophisticated parsing and character interaction.

US GOLD:

● According to the press-blurb, this year's show will see the largest and most impressive US Gold stand to date. The much-heralded *Dungeons and Dragons computer* game will make its first public appearance, much to the delight of FRP fans everywhere!

Epyx have the *Games: Summer Edition* for sporty types, together with *4×4 Road Race*, which is linked to a competition in which you can win a Kawasaki motorbike!

The latest Capcom titles will also be unveiled, including *LED Storm* and *Tiger Road*, US Gold have also acquired the license to Sega's *Thunderblade* coin-op so there will be plenty of machines there on free play.

In conjunction with Pepsi, US Gold have initiated the Pepsi/US Gold Computer Challenge. Entrants to the PC show will also be given the opportunity of taking part by answering questions about the US Gold stand. Finalists can go forward to the Pepsi Challenge booth and are again put to the test. If the applicant can successfully pass Pepsi's taste test, their name is then put forward to a prize draw for some major prizes!

Also of note will be US Gold's 100ft video wall which is being used as part of the National Computer Games Championships, for those of you with bad eyesight.

AND THE REST . . .

● Electra, whose first release was *Better Dead Than Alien*, will have the game's hero, Brad Zoom, on their stand . . . Incentive will be premiering their new Freescape game, *Total Eclipse*. Set in the heart of Egypt, you have to explore pyramids and tombs, unscramble hieroglyphics and forego the curse of the Pharoahs. You should also be able to see the Amiga version of *Driller* . . . Microdeal have loads of Amiga products at the show: *Major Motion, Tetraquest* (a strategic shoot and collect 'em up), *International Soccer*, the *Insanity Fight Construction Kit, Goldrunner II* and scenery disks, *Fright Night* (based on the film), an adventure game based on Karate Kid II plus *Airball* . . . French company FIL will be unveiling their new arcade conversion label which has the rights to Sega's *Shinobi*, amongst others . . . Logotron have *Star Goose*, a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up for the Amiga, written by Steve Cain and 'Kenny' Everett, and demos of *Xor* by the German authors of *Star Ray* . . . And we'll be there too. CU, C&VG and SU will appear in force, together with a batch of arcade machines on freeplay namely *Operation Wolf, R-Type, Continental Circus* and *Thunderblade*.

AND we'll be unveiling the brill new CU T-shirt drawn by Philip Bond. So...

See ya there!

REVIEWERS CHOICE

This month's fave raves
THE ED: Bomb Jack (Amiga), Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge (64), Star-Ray (Amiga).
STEVE JARRATT: Starglider II (Amiga), Barbarian II (64).
NICK KELLY: Traceurs (Amiga), Bomb Jack (Amiga), Toobin' (coin-op).
GARY WHITTA: Bionic Commando (Amiga), FA/18 Interceptor (Amiga).

CU ALTERNATIVE DECATHALON

1) ABUSE HURLING (holder: M. Pattenden)	6) LONG LUNCH (E. Lacey)
2) MOOSE HERDING (M. Scriven (retd.))	7) TRIPLE LUNCH (G. Williams)
3) FREELANCER FILCHING (G. Penn)	8) FREESTYLE AIR GUITAR (N. Taylor)
4) ENDURANCE TELEPHONING (N. Kelly)	9) AFTERSHAVE PUTT (T. Glennister)
5) JAVELIN CATCHING (N. Kelly)	10) BLIND DATING (A. Smart)

CHART CHAT

Phew! What a non-scorcher! Aside from a spirited entry from Addictive's *Football Manager II* practically the whole 64 chart is made up of cheapos and rereleases. A bit of Tipp-Ex here and there and this could be a top twenty of three years back. Meanwhile not much change at the top of the Amiga charts, though a strong showing by the universally-not-very-much-praised *Fire And Forget*. Weirrddd.

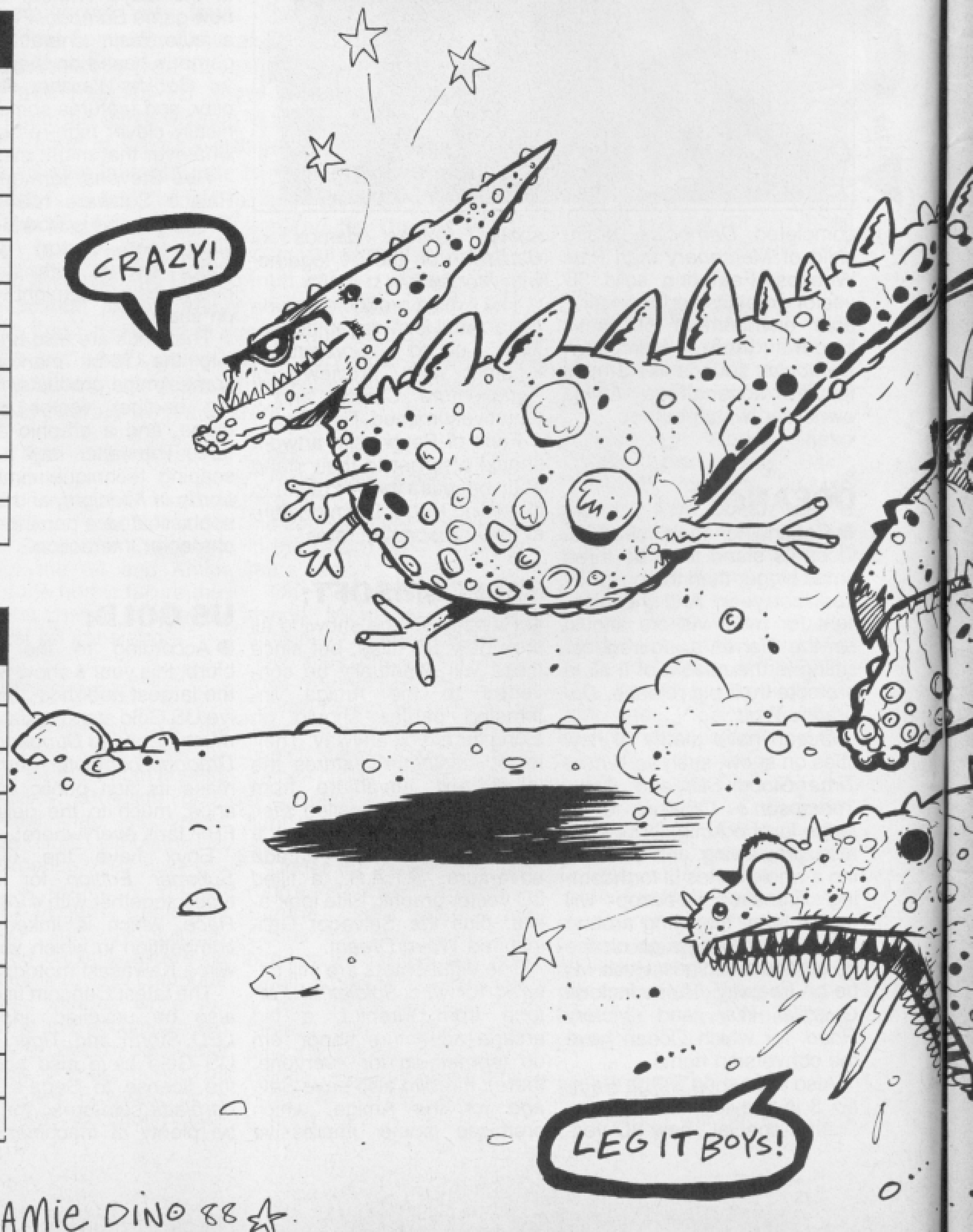
CHARTS

AMIGA CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	FA/18 INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS
2	2	AAARGH!	MELBOURNE HOUSE
3	4	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE
4	10	BUGGY BOY	ELITE
5	NE	FIRE AND FORGET	TITUS
6	9	BLACK LAMP	FIREBIRD
7	9	SIDEWINDER	MASTERTRONIC
8	5	THREE STOOGES	MIRRORSOFT
9	NE	IKARI WARRIORS	ELITE
10	NE	BARDS TALE 2	ELECTRONIC ARTS

C64 ADVENTURE CHART

TM	LM		
1	2	BARDS TALE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
2	6	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
3	1	BARDS TALE 2	ELECTRONIC ARTS
4	RE	DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE	MOSAIC
5	4	MICRO MUD	VIRGIN
6	RE	TIME AND MAGIC	MANDARIN
7	RE	LORD OF THE RINGS	MELBOURNE HOUSE
8	RE	KNIGHT ORC	RAINBIRD
9	10	INHERITANCE	INFOGAMES
10	3	JACK THE RIPPER	CRL



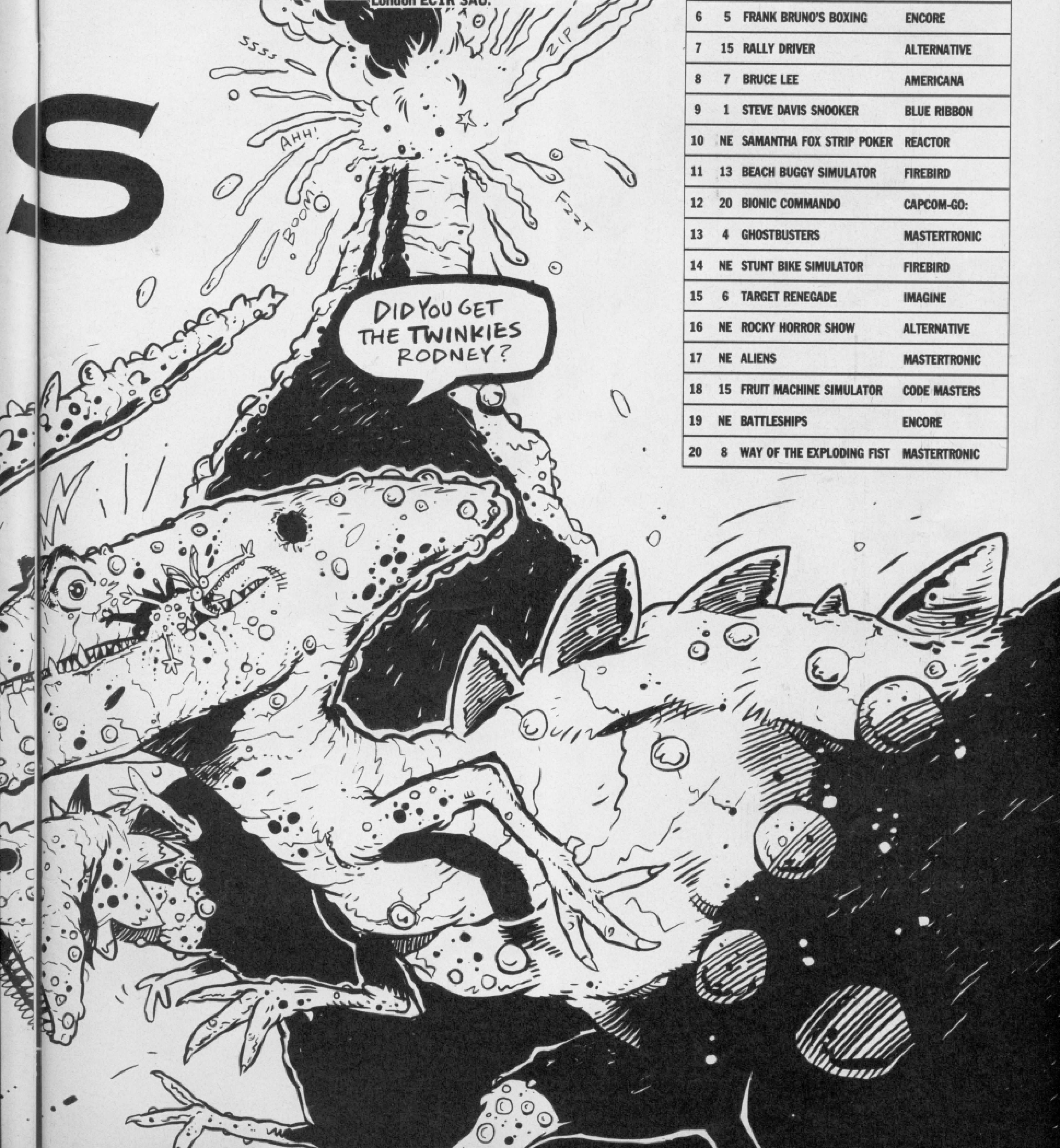
READERS COIN-OP CHART

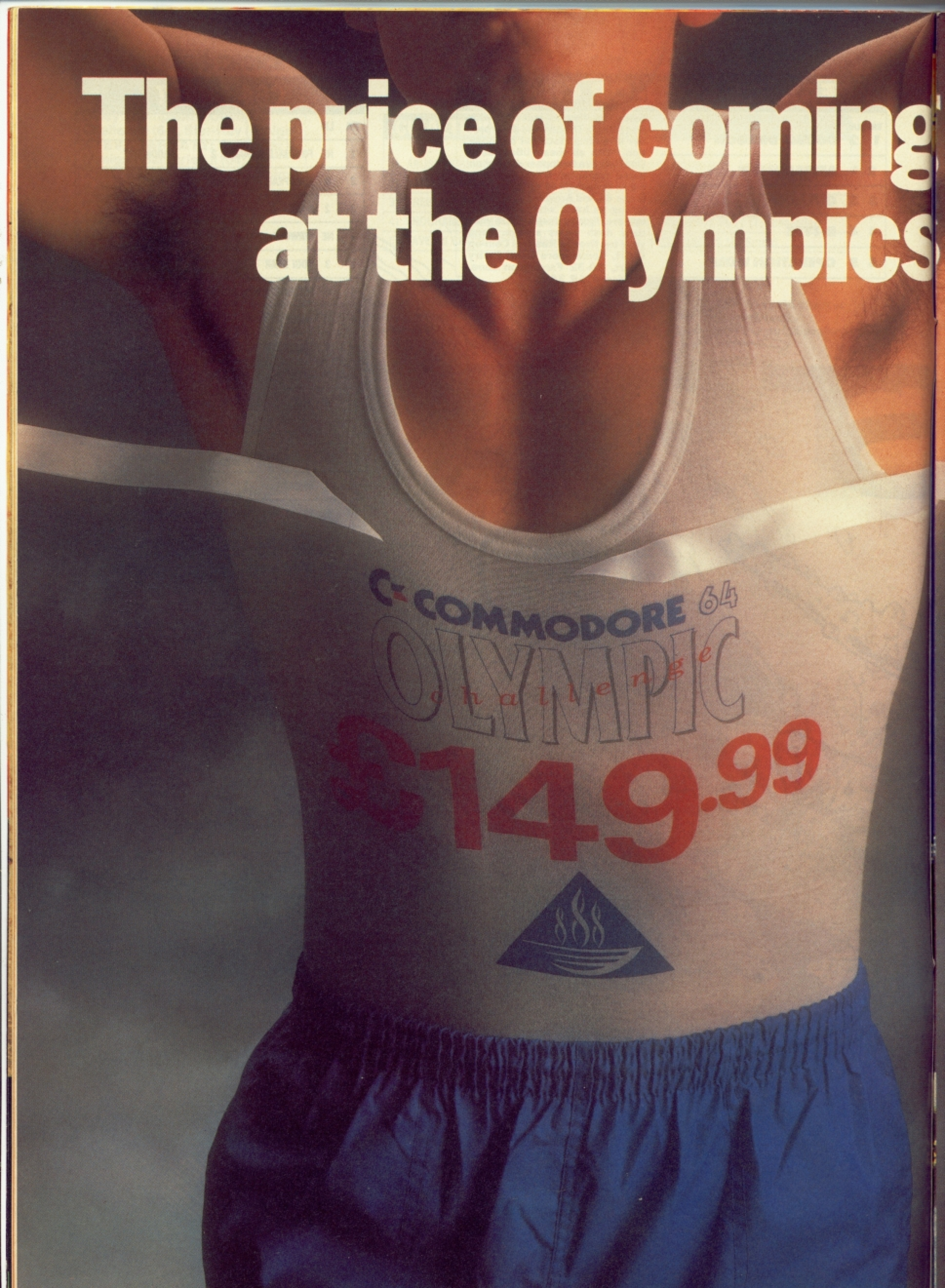
TM	LM	
1	2	DOUBLE DRAGON
2	1	AFTERBURNER
3	3	OUT RUN
4	4	R-TYPE
5	5	OPERATION WOLF

Same big five as last ish, with just *Double Dragon* and *Afterburner* swopping places at top position. With all these titles, save *Out Run* due to appear shortly on home computer, it'll be interesting to see which of 'em does best in the 64 and Amiga charts. Keep letting us know which five coin-ops are digging deepest into your daily dosh — as always, send your top fives to Readers Coin-op Chart, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

C64 CHART

TM	LM		
1	NE	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE
2	9	EUROPEAN FIVE-A-SIDE	FIREBIRD
3	2	A C E	CASCADE
4	NE	AIRWOLF	ENCORE
5	3	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE
6	5	FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING	ENCORE
7	15	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE
8	7	BRUCE LEE	AMERICANA
9	1	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON
10	NE	SAMANTHA FOX STRIP POKER	REACTOR
11	13	BEACH BUGGY SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD
12	20	BIONIC COMMANDO	CAPCOM-GO:
13	4	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC
14	NE	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD
15	6	TARGET RENEGADE	IMAGINE
16	NE	ROCKY HORROR SHOW	ALTERNATIVE
17	NE	ALIENS	MASTERTRONIC
18	15	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
19	NE	BATTLESHIPS	ENCORE
20	8	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	MASTERTRONIC




The price of coming
at the Olympics
COMMODORE 64
OLYMPIC
challenge
£149.99

g first
s

If you weren't selected for the Seoul Olympics, no need to feel out of the running.

Because everything you need to compete in all the events is right here with the Commodore 64 Olympic Challenge pack. And at only £149.99, your gold medal's practically in the bag.

Here's the C64 Olympic line-up…

* **C64 Computer, the latest version of the world's best-selling computer.**
* **Cassette unit, for simple loading of programs.**
* **Joystick to put you in complete control of screen action.**
* **Plus all the excitement of 10 great sporting games.**

On day one, you can use all your skills and reflexes to race against the clock in the track and field events. Or take up the challenge of world series baseball, weightlifting, football, tennis and the championship title fights.

And when the Olympics are over, you can then go out and grab the best beat 'em ups, one-on-one, adventure and simulation games that really come alive on the C64.

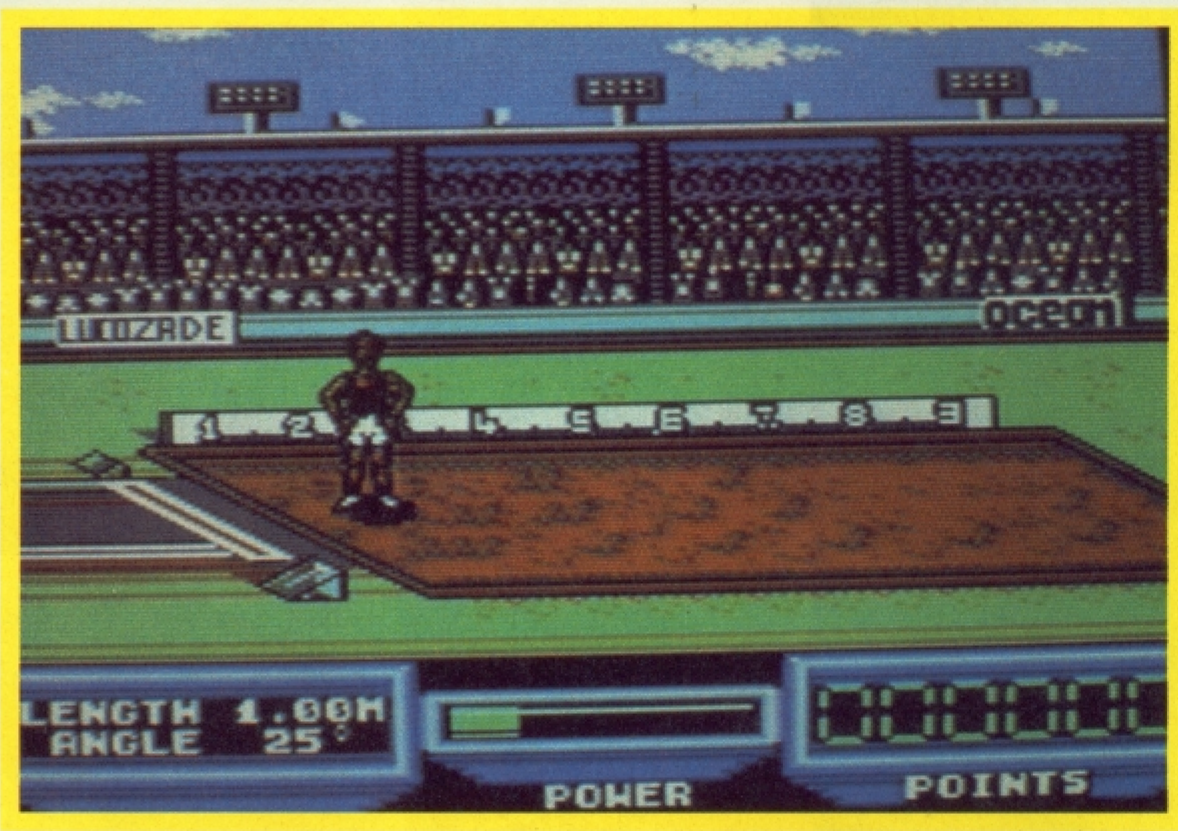
There's only a few days to go before the opening ceremony, so make a dash for your local dealer and ask about the C64 Olympic Challenge pack. Or telephone 0800 800 477 for more details.



Commodore

Daley OLYMPIC

Ocean
Price:
£9.95 cass/
£12.95 disk



In preparation for the XXIVth Olympic games in Seoul, Ocean have taken their ageing Daley Thompson licence, given it a good dusting down and come up with yet more joystick-breaking action.

Based around the ten Olympic decathalon events, Daley has to prove his worth at the 100m sprint, pole vault, javelin, discus, high jump, long jump, shot putt, 110m hurdles plus the 400 and 800 metres.

More or less a re-vamping of the original *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* which appeared in 1984, the latest Daley goings-on have a similar style of play, much improved graphics and one or two extra touches, including an initial workout session in the gym.

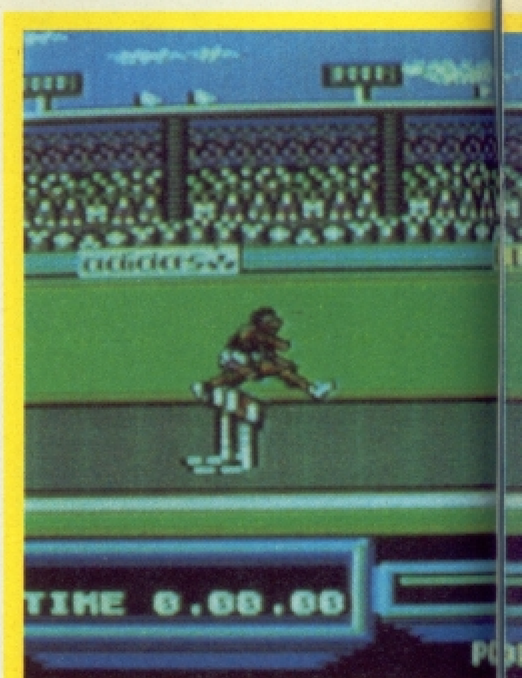
Before the serious competition begins, Daley is put through his paces doing bicep curls with free weights, together with sit-ups and leg-raises on a multigym. Each repetition adds a small amount of Lucozade to a bottle at the side. If the bottle is filled before the time limit expires it can then be 'drunk' before one of the main events to instill Daley with extra energy, making that particular event slightly easier. However, if he flunks the workout, Daley receives little more than a good telling off from his manager.

Having successfully advanced to the great outdoors, Daley begins the contest in earnest. He starts by selecting some suitable footwear from a scrolling catalogue of 11 pairs of Adidas trainers. Only once a selection has been made is the trainer's correct purpose revealed; Each event has its own appropriate footwear, and if the correct shoes are chosen for the current event, Daley's efforts are increased (right tools for the right job and all that).

All of the events require a degree of effort on Daley's behalf, which manifests itself in some pretty ferocious joystick waggling. If you're unfamliar with this mode of play (ie, you live under a rock or haven't been born yet), you simply move the joystick rapidly from side to side to boost a constantly falling 'power

▲ *Daley flops in the sand pit.*

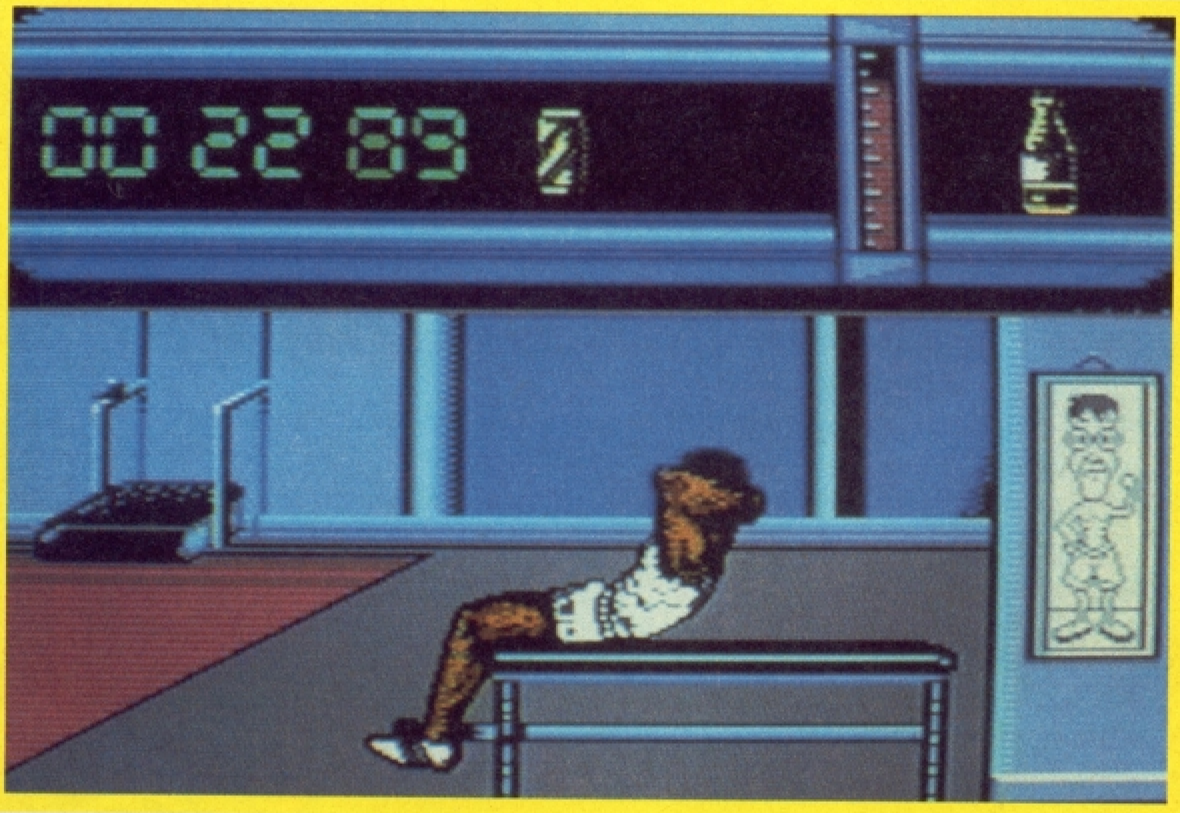
▼ *Legging it for home.*



▼ *Daley prepares to discus and analyse.*



Thompson's CHALLENGE



A few sit-ups in the gym. Say a hundred?

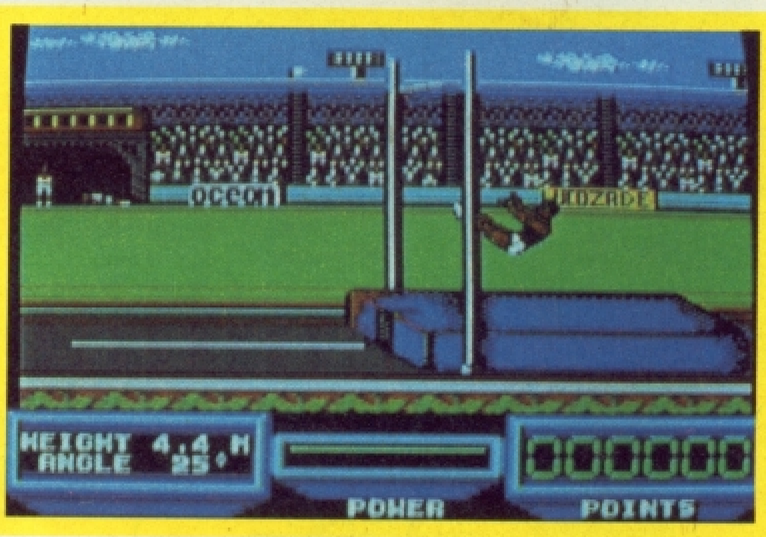
meter'. Once Daley's energy is up to the required level this is either sustained for the duration of the race, or the fire button pressed to



initiate the necessary action and held down to increase the angle of attack of the jump or throw.

As Daley competes in each event, he scores points according to the decathlon points system. Unlike previous games which halted your efforts as soon as you failed to qualify on one event, *DTOC* keeps a check on your score and only sends you back to the first discipline once it feels that you don't stand a chance of winning a medal (clever, eh?). In this way, you can make a total cock-up of one event yet still progress to the final standings by doing well in the remaining events.

Looks like he could do with some Lucozade.



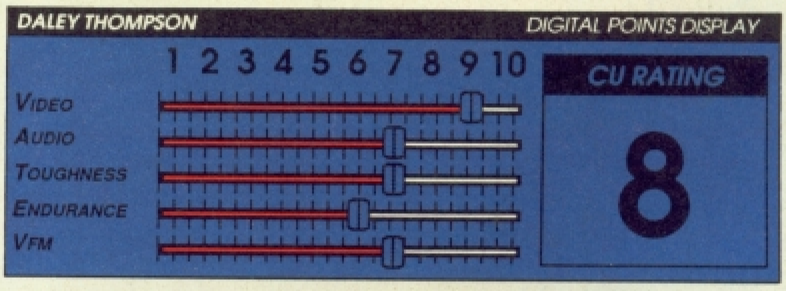
The whole competition takes place against a stadium backdrop, complete with spectators doing 'The Wave' and some effective parallax scrolling. It is Daley himself who steals the show, though, being beautifully drawn (he's even the right colour this time!) and extremely well animated as he goes through a variety of different manoeuvres.

Having said that, *DTOC* is very similar to its four-year-old predecessor. If you've missed out on games of this sort, then this latest case of the DT's should fit the bill nicely. Those of you who already own a sporty waggler (such as *Dacathalon* on the Firebird budget label, one of the Epyx range or even Daley's earlier offering) should have a good look before shelling out.

Steve Jarratt

AMIGA

An Amiga version is promised for late August, boasting large, digitised Daley sprites, realistic perspective scrolling on backdrops, improved gameplay and high quality sound. Sounds like one to watch out for . . .



GET SWEATY!

WIN TONS OF ADIDAS KIT

COMPETITION

What with the Olympics on the way and the hipness of leisure (pronounced *leesure*) gear we thought we'd ask Ocean to use their influence with Daley and his contacts at Adidas to get hold of some kit.

So what can you win?

- **The winner will receive an entire Adidas rigout including trainers, tracksuit, vest, shorts and socks.**
- **Five runners-up can count on receiving a pair of snazzy Adidas trainers, and copies of the game.**
- **Twenty runners-up will get a copy of *Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge*, Amiga or 64.**



And how can you win?
By answering a few questions, for a start.

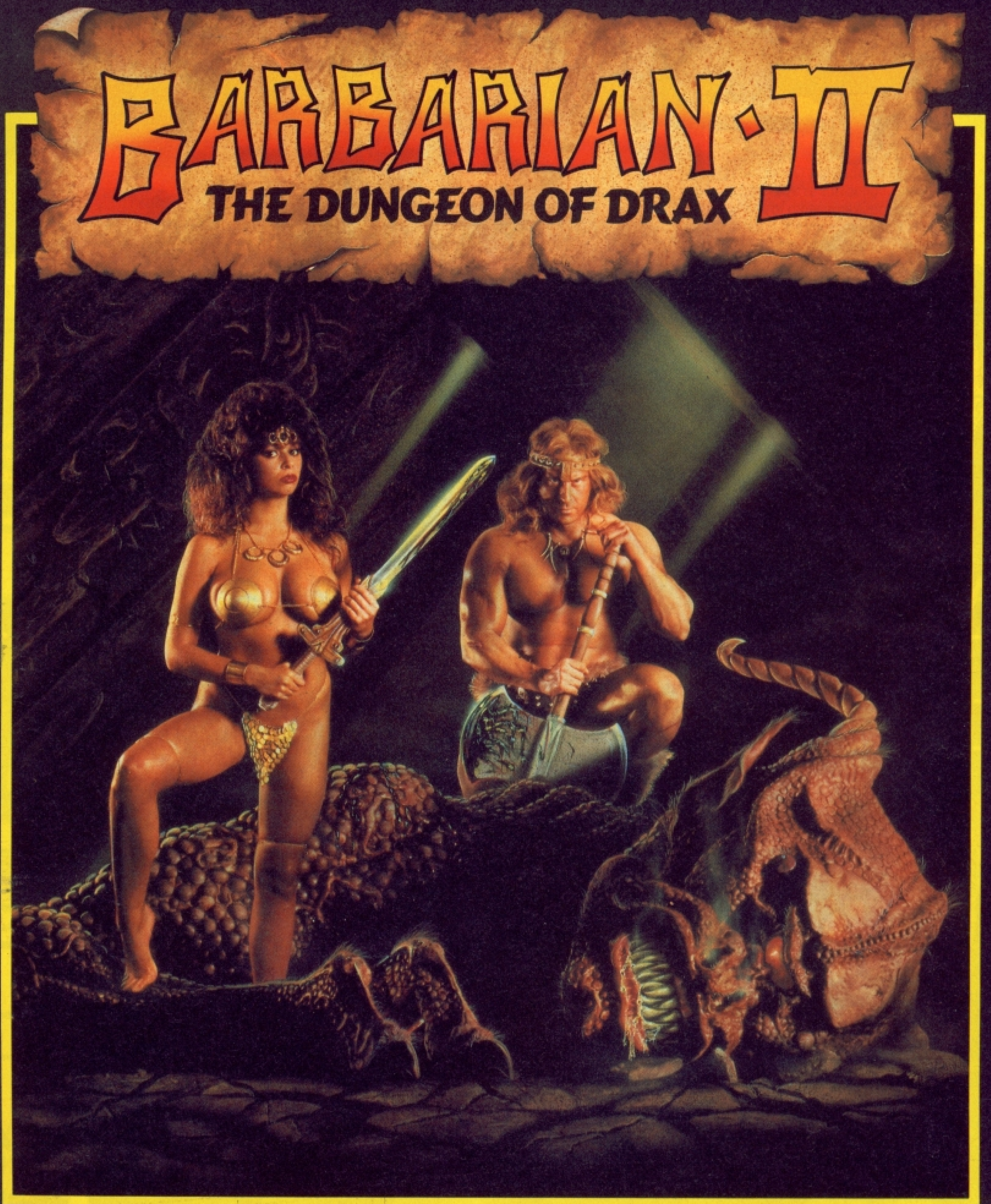
1. Which Olympics were marred by a terrorist outrage?
2. At which Olympics did Daley win his first Decathlon gold?
3. Who is the current 100m world record holder?
4. In which Olympics did Steve Ovett collapse from heat exhaustion?

And completing a tie-break in less than twenty-five words. The next Olympic venue has still to be announced, Manchester(!) and Greece have been suggested, but we want you to put up a case for where they should be held. For example, "I think the next Olympics should be held in Erdington because my Dad's always wanted to go to the Olympics." Get it?

Answers on a sweaty sock to: Daley Compo, Commodore User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. To arrive before September 14. Oh, and don't forget to tell us whether you want an Amiga or a 64 version.







Spectrum Version



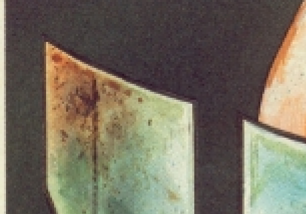
Amiga Version



C64 Version









Take the heroically bronzed HAWKEYE through 12 individually loaded levels of non-stop combat action, featuring real parallax scrolling, dazzling graphics and sound destined to give your ears the treat of their lives.

CBM 64/128

Cassette £9.99
Diskette £12.99 (includes free demos – The Monster Show and more!)

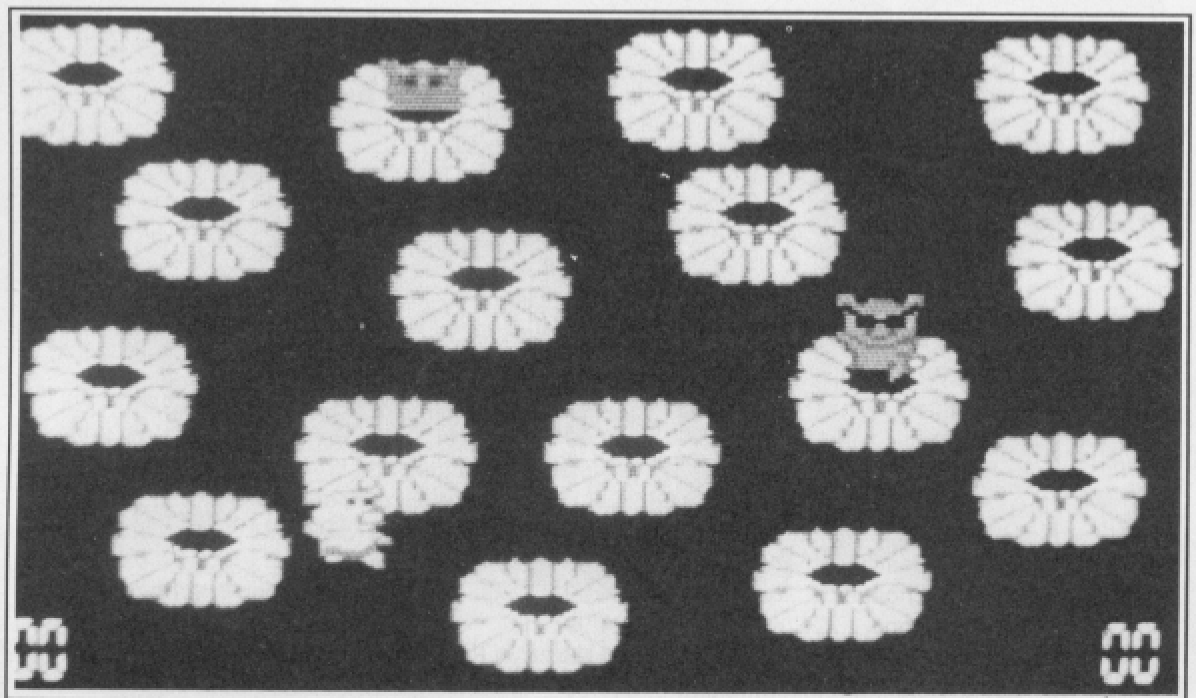
An addictive and beautifully presented shoot 'em up of the highest calibre! GOLD MEDAL ZZAP! 64

Thalamus, 1 Saturn House, Calleva Park, Aldermaston, Berkshire RG7 4QW ☎ (07356) 77261/2

Don't miss the

Gold Rush

There are 9 randomly placed GOLD RUSH games throughout the country – 3 GOLD, 6 YELLOW. If you're lucky enough to buy one then just phone THALAMUS to claim your FREE Amstrad Studio 100 (gold) or ghetto blaster (yellow).



▲ *Gammon on and get it!*

PSYCHO PIGS

64/128
US Gold
Price: £9.99 cass/ £14.99 disk

This game offends me on two counts, not only has its advertising campaign been puerile and sexist, but it is *pigist*. The game, you see, concerns pigs and the packaging makes a number of Oink! style unfunny puns at their expense which I think is in extremely pork taste.

Psycho Pigs UXB is, in fact, a conversion of an obscure Jaleco coin-op which I'm not sure has ever appeared in this country. (*Adopts pompous Simon Bates voice*) I saw it in Japan last year at the coin-op fare and took a perverse enjoyment from playing it. It's stupid, has minimalist graphics and dour sound. Good idea for a conversion really.

The idea is ridiculously simple. You control a pig and on each screen you're surrounded by a group of other pigs chucking bombs around. It's your job to stay alive ('save your bacon' geddit?) and clear the screen. You do this by lobbing bombs at them. The bombs are of the classic comic book variety (round) and each has a number which denotes the length of the fuse. Once you throw one it starts counting down before it explodes. A direct hit causes an instant explosion whilst some explode without being touched.

After certain levels you get a bonus screen in which you have to snog lady pigs as they pop up and down from holes in the ground. Occasionally you'll be able to pick up items left around the place such as rice balls (!) which help you run faster and sweet potatoes which give a 1,000 bonus. Very oriental.

Graphics on the original, as I said, were pretty minimal, so converting these to the 64 wasn't too much of a strain for Software Developments. They're used to doing games with basic graphics, they did *Bubble Bobble*, a classic example of a great conversion. *Psycho Pigs UXB* isn't really in that league, because it's simply not as good a game. It's silly, basically which is alright, but for how long I'm not sure.

Mike Pattenden

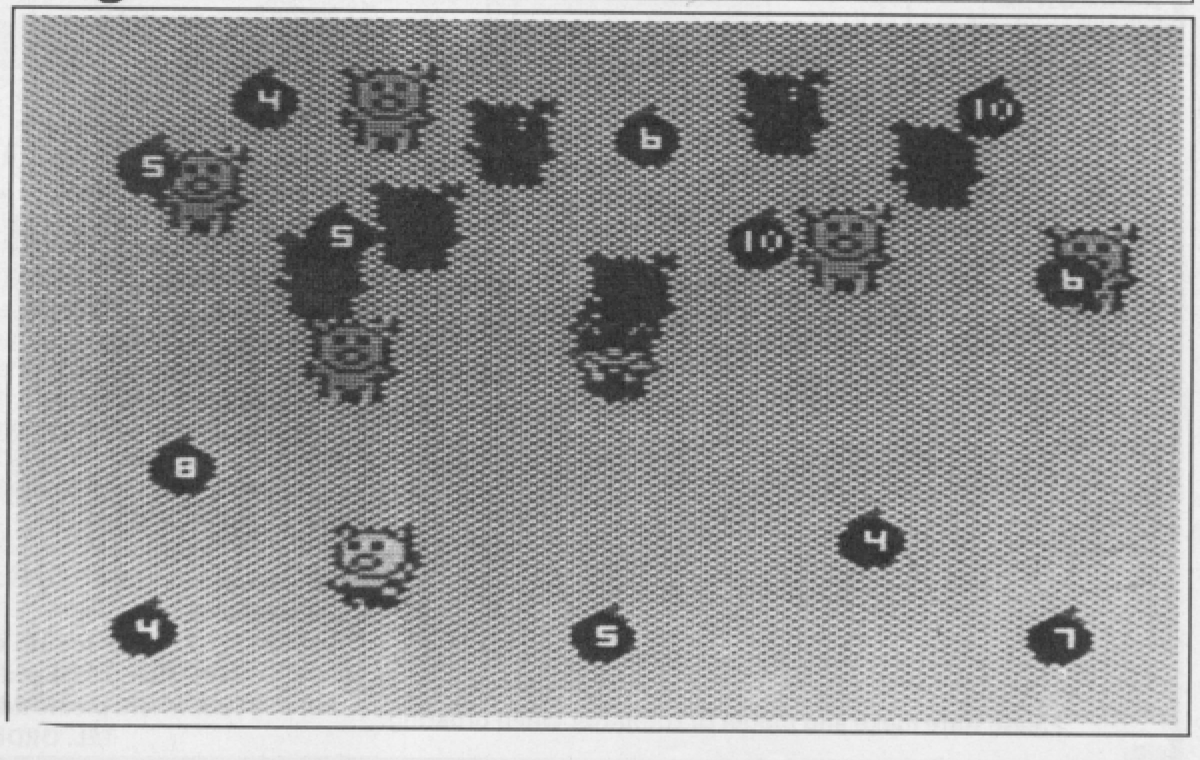
PSYCHO PIGS UXB — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

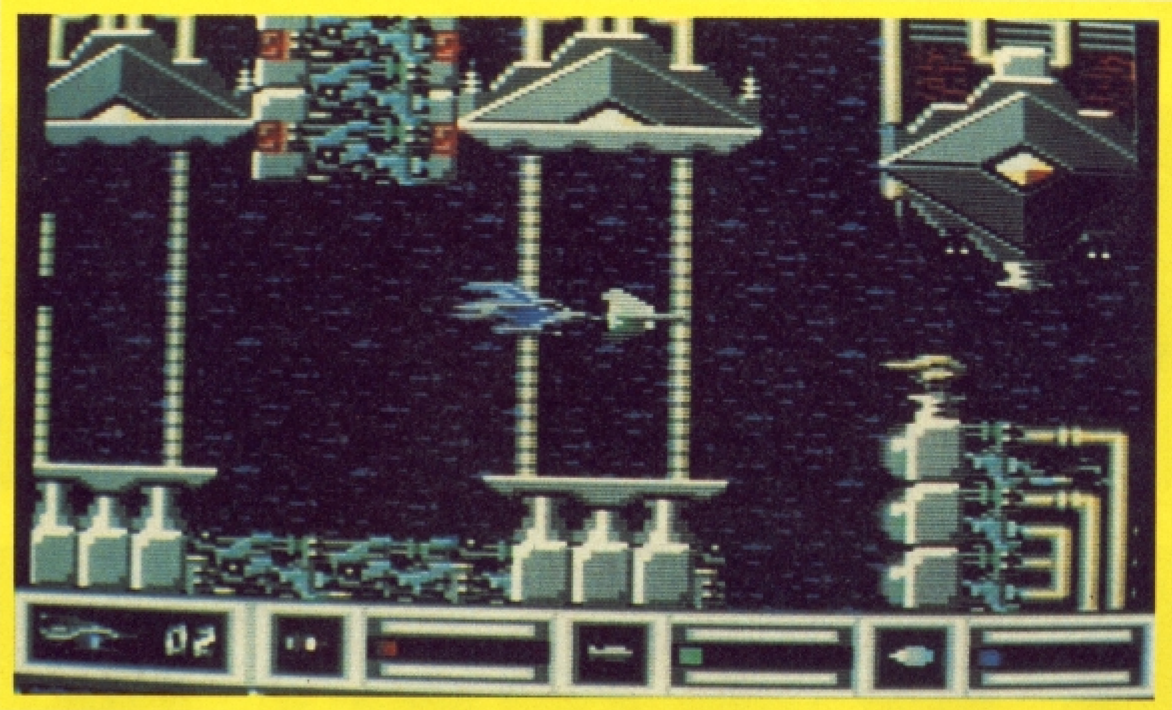
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

6

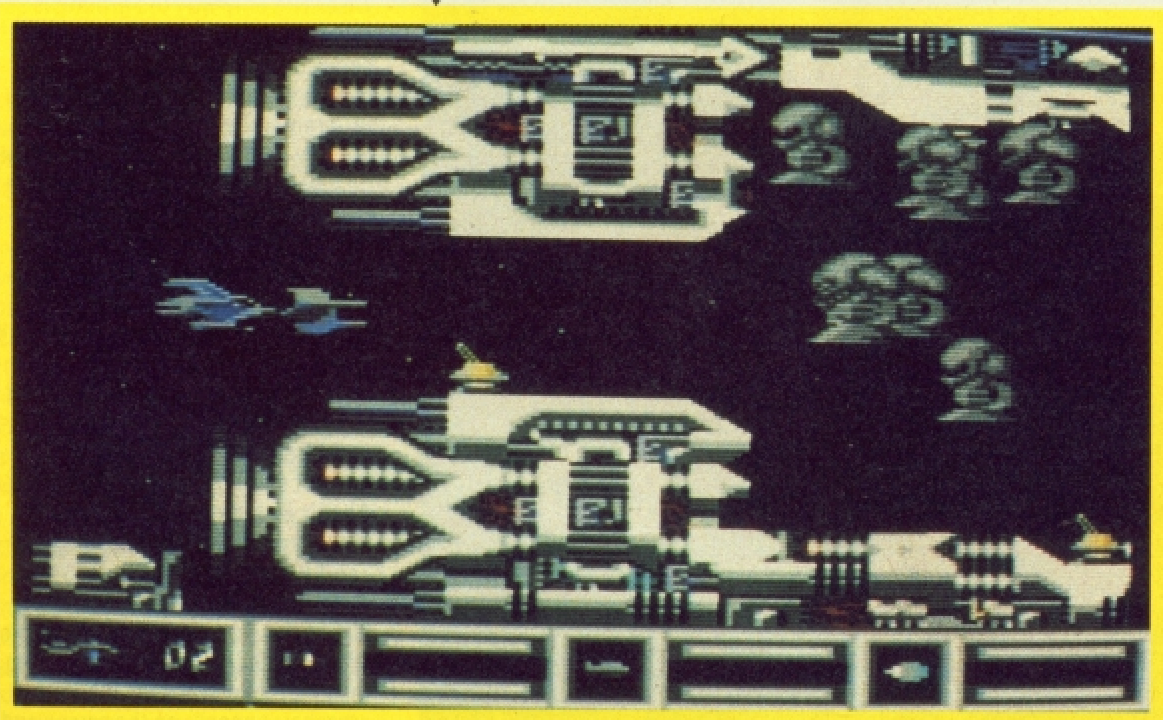




Ghosts in the Machine.

KATAKIS

Now, what does this remind you of . . .



64/128 Rainbow Arts/ US Gold Price: £9.99 cass £14.99 disk

Activision managed to trample everyone else in the rush for the official *R-Type* licence, but that hasn't stopped everyone releasing a clone which bears quite a few resemblances to Irem's classic arcade game. This is Rainbow Arts' attempt.

For those who've missed out on *R-Type* (where have you been?), it's a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, very much in the mould of *Nemesis, Salamander* and so on. The objective is simply to progress as far as possible, picking up extra weapons and destroying everything stupid enough to get in your way. At the end of each level there's a big guardian who has to be despatched before the next level begins — like so many other games of this type.

So what makes *Katakis* more like *R-Type* than anything else? Well, some of the extra weapons, backdrops and sprites are derived straight from the arcade machine, and there's also a standard 'beamer' weapon which the ship starts out with. Pressing fire rapidly launches a volley of laser missiles, but keeping it depressed for a few seconds charges the beamer (represented by a bar at the bottom of the screen) and sends a huge laser burst belting across the screen destroying everything in its path. Since some aliens take several shots to kill, it's often more viable to charge up the beamer (leaving the ship defenceless for a few seconds) and blast all and sundry, rather than fire frantically as the enemy draws closer and closer.

The action starts in an asteroid field, with the ship picking its way through static rocks. Aliens appear soon after and are destroyed or dodged — contact is fatal. Sometimes an alien drops a coloured pod, which is picked up to add an extra feature to the craft; these include reflecting lasers, homing missiles, a laser beam, smart bombs, a shield, speed-ups and a protective pod which attaches itself to the front of the ship and destroys just about everything it touches. This pod can be detatched from the ship by pressing the space bar and sent forward to destroy oncoming aliens or a giant guardian.

Katakis is technically very clever — there are loads of sprites on-screen, and the three level parallax scrolling is excellent. The graphics are varied, with some lovely backdrops and stunning visual effects. Later levels include what looks like the inside of a giant computer, complete with floating chips, alien environments, and a screen that looks almost identical to level one of *R-Type*! Some of the sprites are superb, with excellent animation, although I thought that a few of the guardians were a little rough around the edges. The soundtracks are good, but predictable, a little *too* Europoppy.

A really neat touch is the two-player feature, which allows one person to control the ship and another to guide the pod, *Wizball*-fashion. However, apart from this there's nothing particularly new on offer, and there's also a long and fairly awkward multiload to endure. This won't discourage ardent shoot 'em up fans — I certainly found the action very enjoyable — but those who are a little more apathetic towards the genre, and who may already have a few of these games in their collection, may feel a lot less enthusiastic about playing yet another horizontally scrolling game — even if it is a good one.

One thing's for sure, what with Ocean's excellent *Salamander* conversion, Activision's up-and-coming *R-Type* and the very promising-looking *Armalite* from Thalamus, shoot 'em up fans have never had it so good!

Julian Rignall

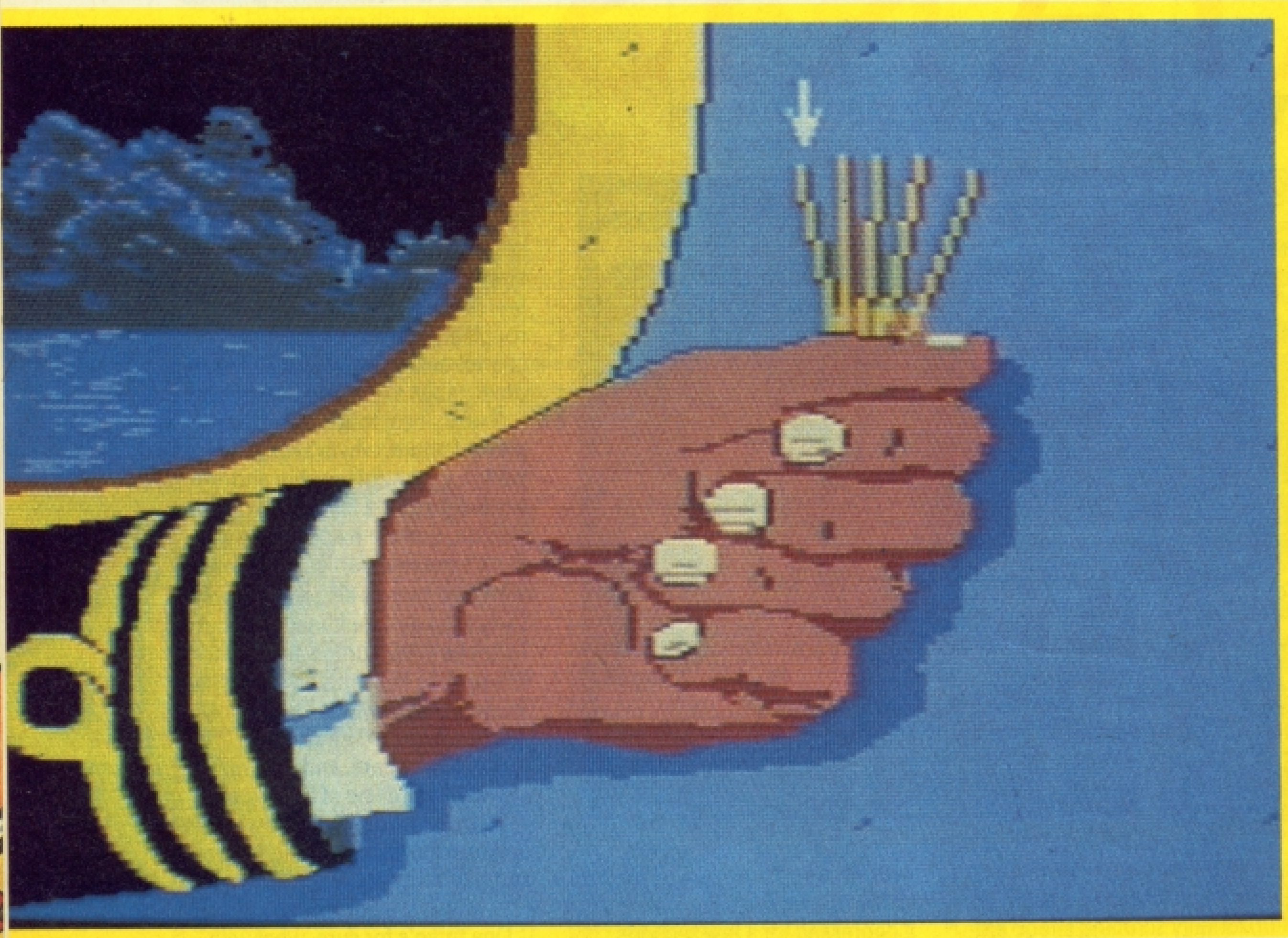
CATAKIS — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
Vfm

CU RATING
8

NIGHT RAIDER



64/128
Gremlin Graphics
Price: £9.99 cass/ £14.99 disk

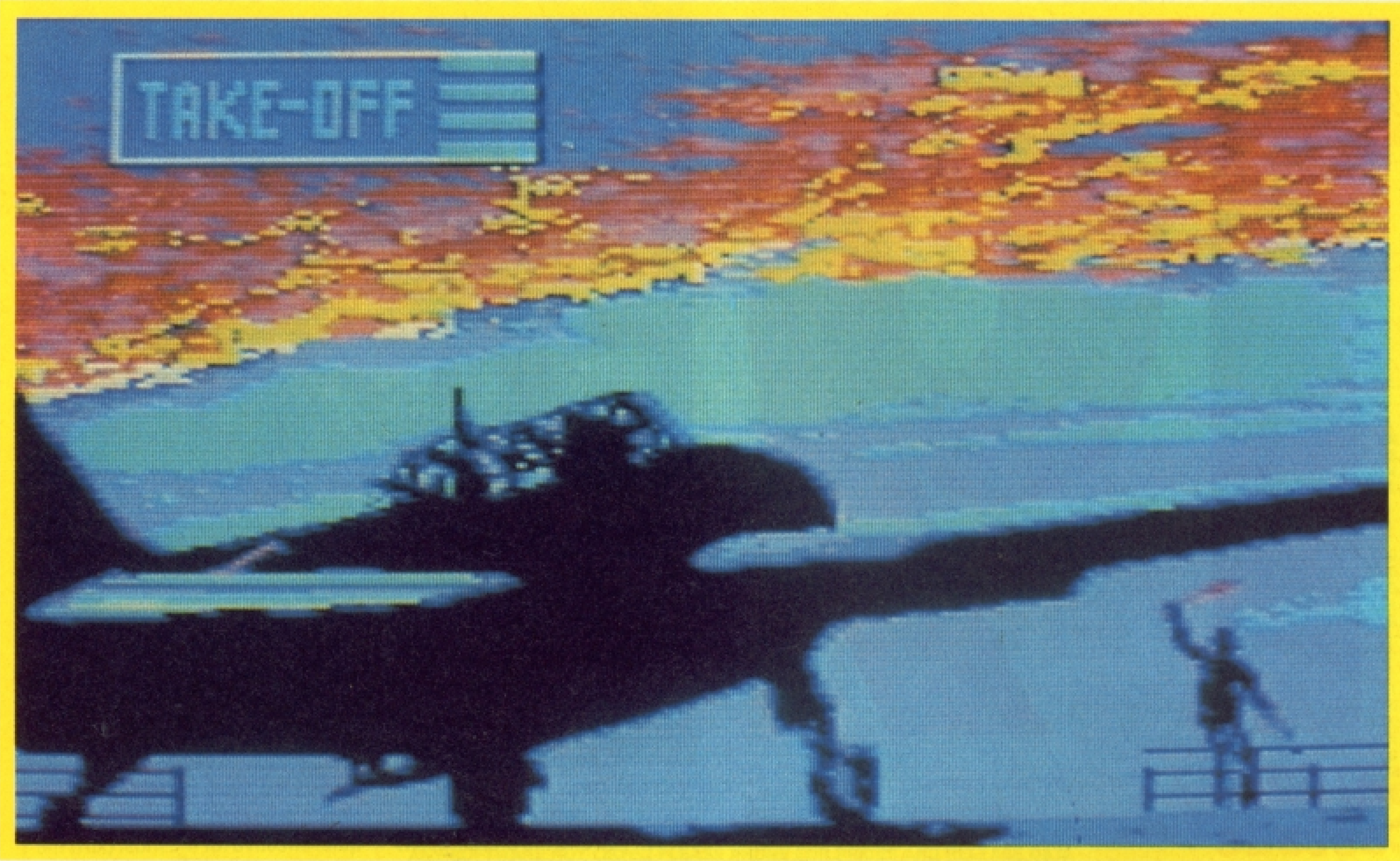
One of the first games I ever played when I bought my first 64 nearly three years ago was U.S. Gold's *Dambusters*. It struck just the right balance between arcade action, strategy and flight simulation. In fact I enjoyed playing it so much and US Gold's subsequent *Ace of Aces* that I'm surprised there haven't been more games like this.

Casting aside all the over-the-top blurb about 'an awesome shape rumbling towards its destiny' and '50,000 tons of awesome power knifing its way through an inky black sea' what we've got here is quite a pleasing attempt at recreating the gameplay and atmosphere of *Dambusters*. If you know anything about WWII, or if you just happen to have a copy of the *Night Raider* manual in front of you, you'll know that the Bismarck was finally sunk by a Gruman Avenger torpedo plane in 1941. What *Night Raider* does is recreate the Avenger's attack run on the Bismarck, with you in control. What the illustration on the pack is supposed to represent though is anybody's guess.

As the title would suggest, your attack on the German ship takes place at night. As in *Dambusters* there's very little to see scenery-wise. The only way the ground is distinguished from the sky is the series of dots that scroll under you to give the sensation of movement. (But remember you're flying over the sea, so there wouldn't be a great deal to see anyway.)

The Avenger is a big plane, and that's why it takes a crew of four to operate it. Aside from the pilot, you'll also have to become the engineer, navigator and tailgunner if you want to succeed in your mission. As the pilot your job is just to fly the aircraft, keeping it at the correct speed, making sure it doesn't stray off course, and so on. All this is done by using standard flight sim controls and keeping a careful eye on the handful of instruments on the dashboard. By hitting the space bar, you can toggle your joystick control between flying the aircraft and combat, where a crosshair appears on the screen and can be used for targetting to destroy any enemy boats or aircraft that appear.

The engineer has the responsibility of preparing the Avenger for takeoffs and landings, as well as keeping a check on the plane's functions. Simple tasks such as ensuring the landing gear is in the correct position, and ensuring the right fuel tank is engaged are easily overlooked, and any mishap could lead to a serious disaster. The Navigator has probably got the easiest job of the lot. All that has to be done on this map screen is move a small target box to the Avenger's proposed destination. The pilot then has to steer the plane accordingly to match the red indicator that appears



Prepare for take-off.

on the compass. The Navigator does however have to allow for such factors as enemy aircraft and boats, and the movement of the Bismarck.

Finally the tailgunner screen is very similar to the pilot's screen in reverse. Using the free-roaming crosshair, enemy planes and other such things can be filled full of lead (providing you have enough ammunition left of course.).

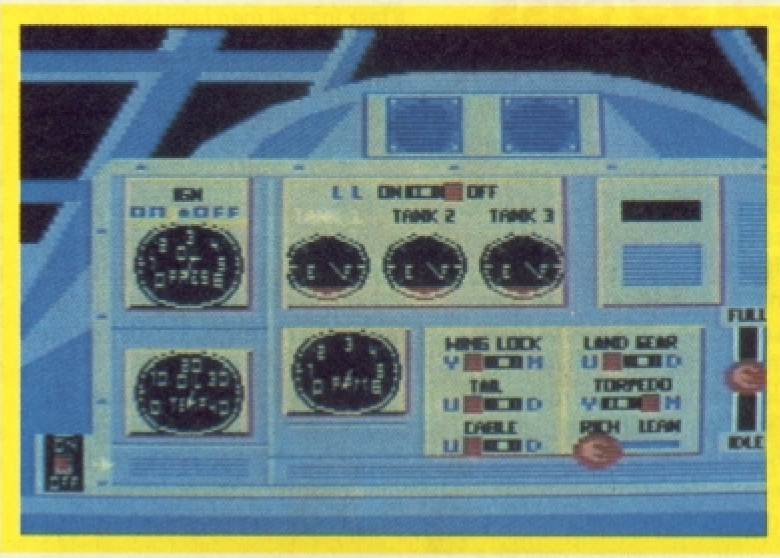
From what I've just told you, you may get the impression that *Night Raider* is little more than *Dambusters* revisited, but there is in fact much more strategy and thinking involved, due to a host of extra features. Torpedoes, for instance, are used to attack the Bismarck when you finally reach it, and the firing of them requires a joint effort between pilot and engineer. In addition, you take off in *Night Raider* from HMS Ark Royal, rather than a land-based strip as in *Dambusters* which makes things all the more challenging, should you have to return to initiate repairs.

There are also a couple of nice touches such as the camera on the engineer's screen which allows you to replay your attack on the Bismarck after the mission, and the way in which you have to select a straw from five held out be an officer to select what kind of mission you'll be undertaking. It's a shame, however, that the excellent opening sequence on the ST (featuring a sampled Hitler and Winston Churchill) could not have been added, even if only on the disk version, as it adds to the overall atmosphere no end.

However, that omission was inevitable owing to the 64's relatively small capabilities and memory. *Night Raider* is an interesting mix of game elements that should appeal to all different groups of gamers. The graphics range from average to really quite impressive, and sound is put to good use (shame about the awful engine noise and title tune though).

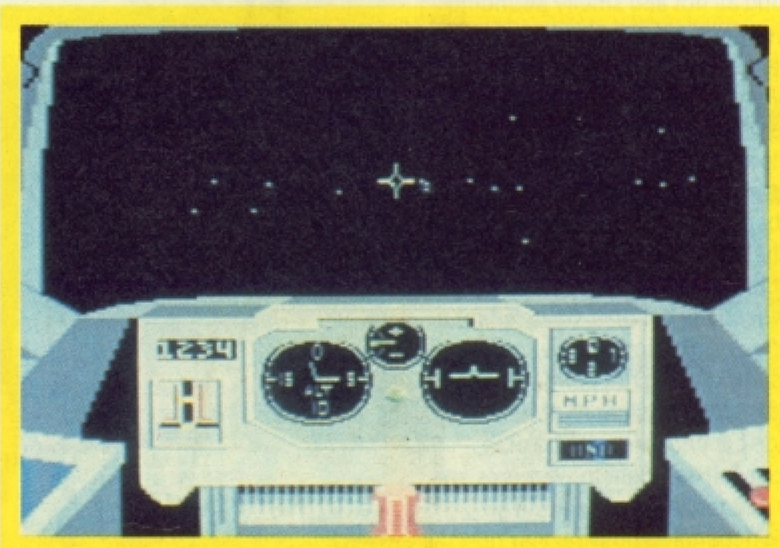
If you missed *Dambusters* and are on the lookout for something along those lines, you should go for *Night Rider*.

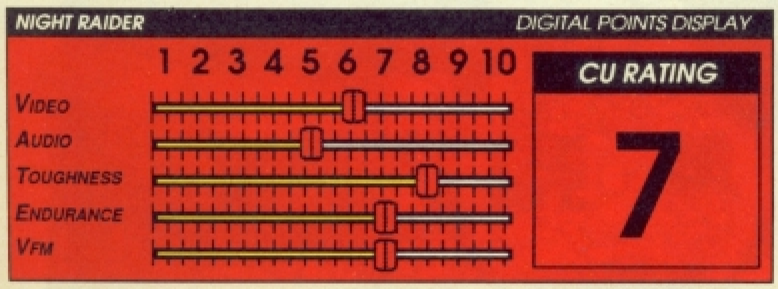
Gary Whitta



Checking the navigator's view.

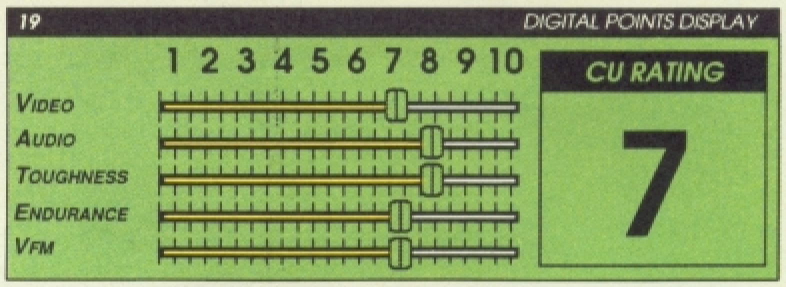
Flying into the inky darkness.





19





64/128 Cascade Price: £9.99 cass £14.99 disk

Situated thousands of miles away from 'Nam in America (right hand over heart, look at sky patriotically) you (and up to three unlucky buddies) have been drafted to fight for freedom, democracy and liberty. But before you get to kick the hides of some Commie pinko subversive Charlies, basic training has to be mastered.

Cascade's *19* provides players with some *Combat School* style gameplay based loosely on the Paul Hardcastle 'Nam song.

First off is the assault course, a must for all would-be cowards. A variety of obstacles, as the name suggests, assault you. To save you getting all hot and smelly pounding on your joysticks, to clear an obstacle you have to time your movement by using a little bar at the base of the screen. Pressing fire starts a small marker moving to the right of a bar and releasing fire when the bar goes red at the precise point on the approach to the obstacle will start the appropriate movement. However, the bar only stays red for a short period of time so you can't cheat by keeping fire permanently depressed. On the monkey bars, nudge bar and the concrete pipe, precise left and right movements are also needed to swing, shuffle or crawl depending on what you're trying to traverse.

If you can make it past the assault course with both legs and your head intact you are then skilled in the art of 'plugging' the enemy with a 7.62 bullet on the shooting range. This is a task for real men (and women). No poofy cross hairs here, the targets spring up and you can scroll the view through your sight using the directional controls. There is no indication on which bit of the screen you are actually targetted on apart from the scenery which is expanded in your sight, so it takes a good guess and quick reactions to get to the right bit of the screen before the target drops.

Jeep driving is the third event, a section that falls flat on its face compared to the other stages. Drive your jeep, avoid the obstacles and collect bonuses.

Last is the unarmed combat between you and the drill sergeant — hardly IK+ but it passes. Only a small number of moves grace your joystick, including jabs, kicks, headbutts and punches, and as with all the other events you get a time limit in which to beat merry hell out of your opponent.

At the end of your training you get the final ratings based on your performance throughout the stages, ranging from abysmal to exceptional. You can then save out your character for use in *19 Part Two*, whenever that appears. Nice gimmick.

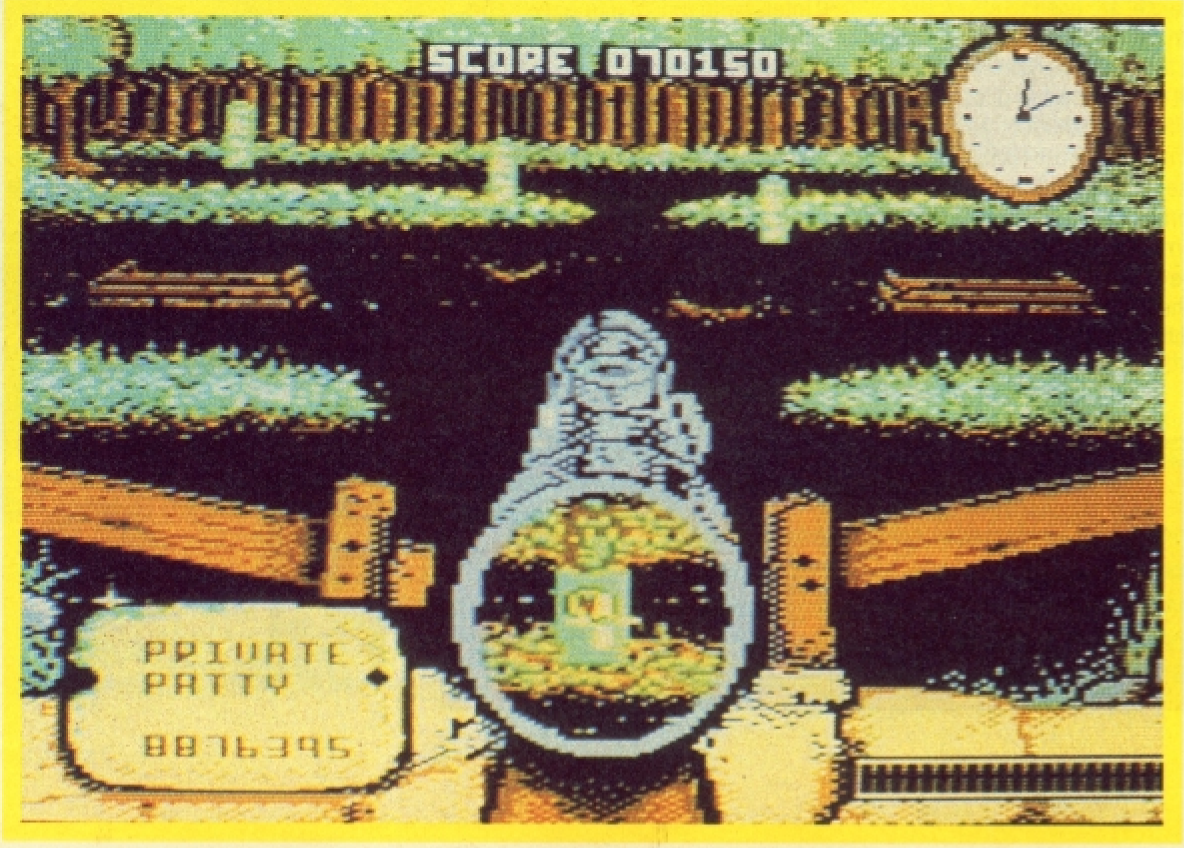
On the title screen and most of the stages an excellent rendition of the tune *19* is played, converted by Rob Hubbard no less. The graphics are quite effective for the most part: the scrolling and backdrops of the assault course and the gun sight in the shooting range, though the scrolling on the jeep section leaves a lot to be desired. When you go up a hill, the bottom half of the play area blanks out and oncoming objects are impossible to see.

There is enough in *19* to keep anybody going for a substantial amount of time. Each event has eight rounds (though only one needs be completed to advance to the next section) and every round needs to be completed to gain a full rating of 'Exceptional'.

19 is surprisingly good — not fantastic, but still a darn good game.

Mark Patterson

▼ **No-no-not bad.**



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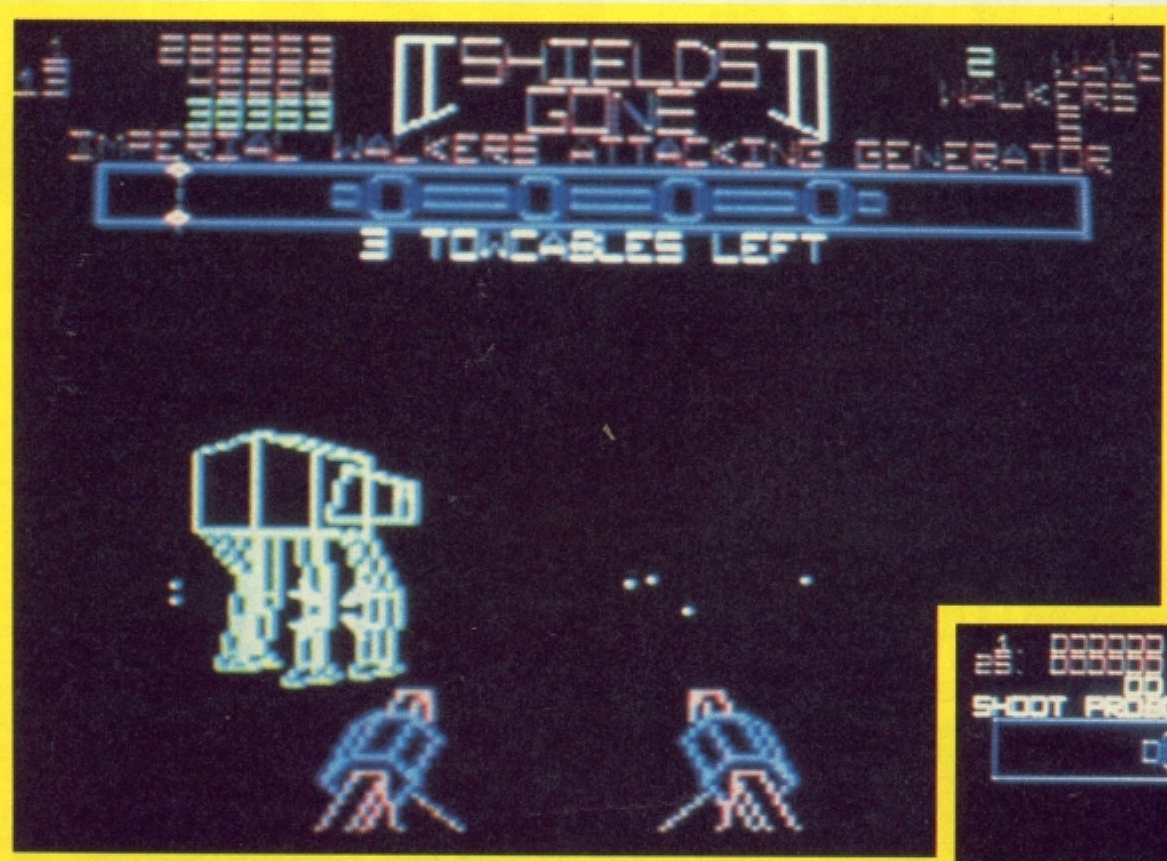
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EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Domark's second conversion from the trilogy of Atari/ Lucasfilm Games Division *Star Wars* arcade machines loosely follows the cinematic plot of its inspiration across four different scenarios. Each section is presented using wireframe vector graphics and



the first takes Luke (that's you) across the icy wastes of Hoth, attempting to blast down hundreds of probots which are scouring the planet, searching for the Rebels' underground hideout. Whenever a Probot sights the base's generator (the only visible part of the complex) it sends a signal back to the waiting Imperial fleet, and four such signals must be received before the Rebel's position is confirmed. The signals can be blasted to delay the fleet's arrival, but the Rebel base's fate is pretty much sealed.

The second episode thus begins once the Empire's AT-AT and AT-ST (All Terrain Armoured Transport and Scout Transport) forces have made planetfall and are advancing on the Rebel installation. Still in the snowspeeder, Luke has to destroy as many of the walkers as possible before they reach the base. This is achieved by firing at the red cockpit windows or, in the case of the AT-ATs, by launching tow cables which wrap around their legs, tripping them up.

After the evacuation of Hoth, you are then firmly placed in the jackboots of Han Solo, piloting the Millenium Falcon against the massed might of the Empire's TIE fighters. These are simply fended off by copious amounts of blasting before entering the final section in which Han attempts to evade the Imperial fighters by flying through an asteroid field. No amount of firepower can destroy the huge boulders, which must simply be avoided. If Han survives, the cycle continues with Luke reappearing against even more Probots back on the surface of Hoth.

Each section has a specific goal which, once completed, is awarded a 'Jedi bonus': the letters J, E, D and I are collected on the corresponding sections and completing the word 'JEDI' is rewarded with temporary invincibility against the Empire's laser bolts.

Considering the ineptitude of the 64 for doing vector graphics, *The Empire Strikes Back* comes off fairly well. Authors Vektor Grafix have cut one or two corners to accommodate the action but the gameplay doesn't suffer too much in comparison with the arcade version. However, the limited amount of variety proves to be its major downfall: once all four sections have been played through a couple of times (not a particularly difficult task), the lure to continue is severely depleted. Unlike its predecessor, which had the increasingly difficult trench sequence to negotiate, *The Empire Strikes Back* provides little in the way of a long term challenge except for increasing your score. Fine for fans of the arcade, but not so hot for everyone else.

Steve Jarratt



▲ **Luke gets forceful.**

AMIGA

The Amiga version of *The Empire Strikes Back* should be in the shops soon and the gameplay remains more or less identical to that of the 64, with the exception of increased numbers of enemies on-screen, plenty of sampled speech, and music on the asteroid sequence (and also a special feature to be discovered within the game ...) **(6)**

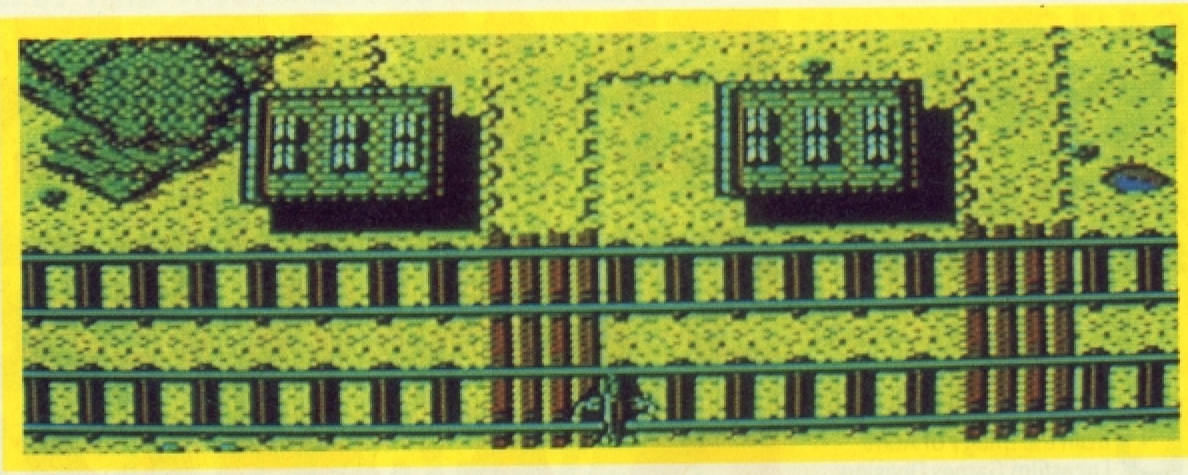
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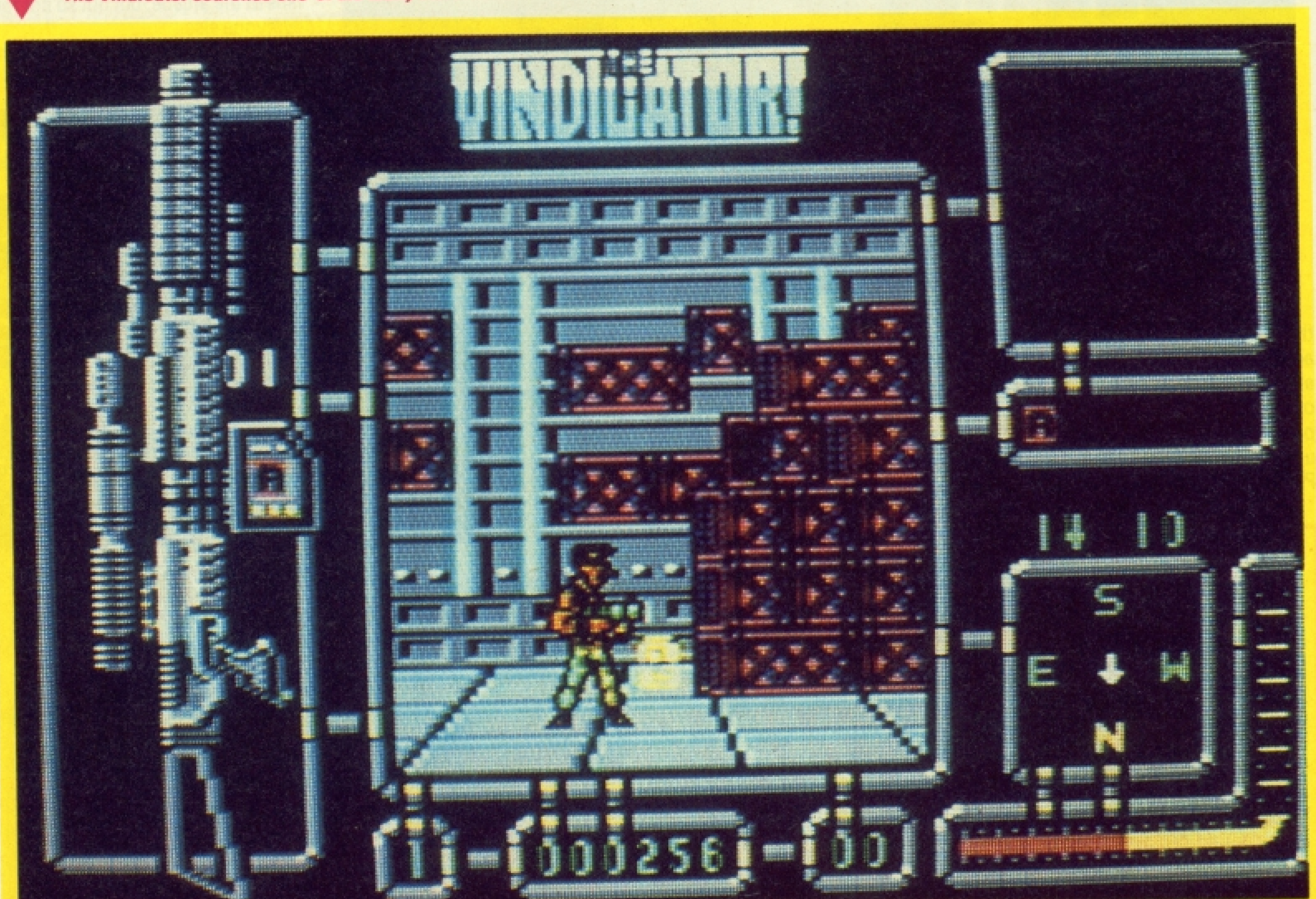


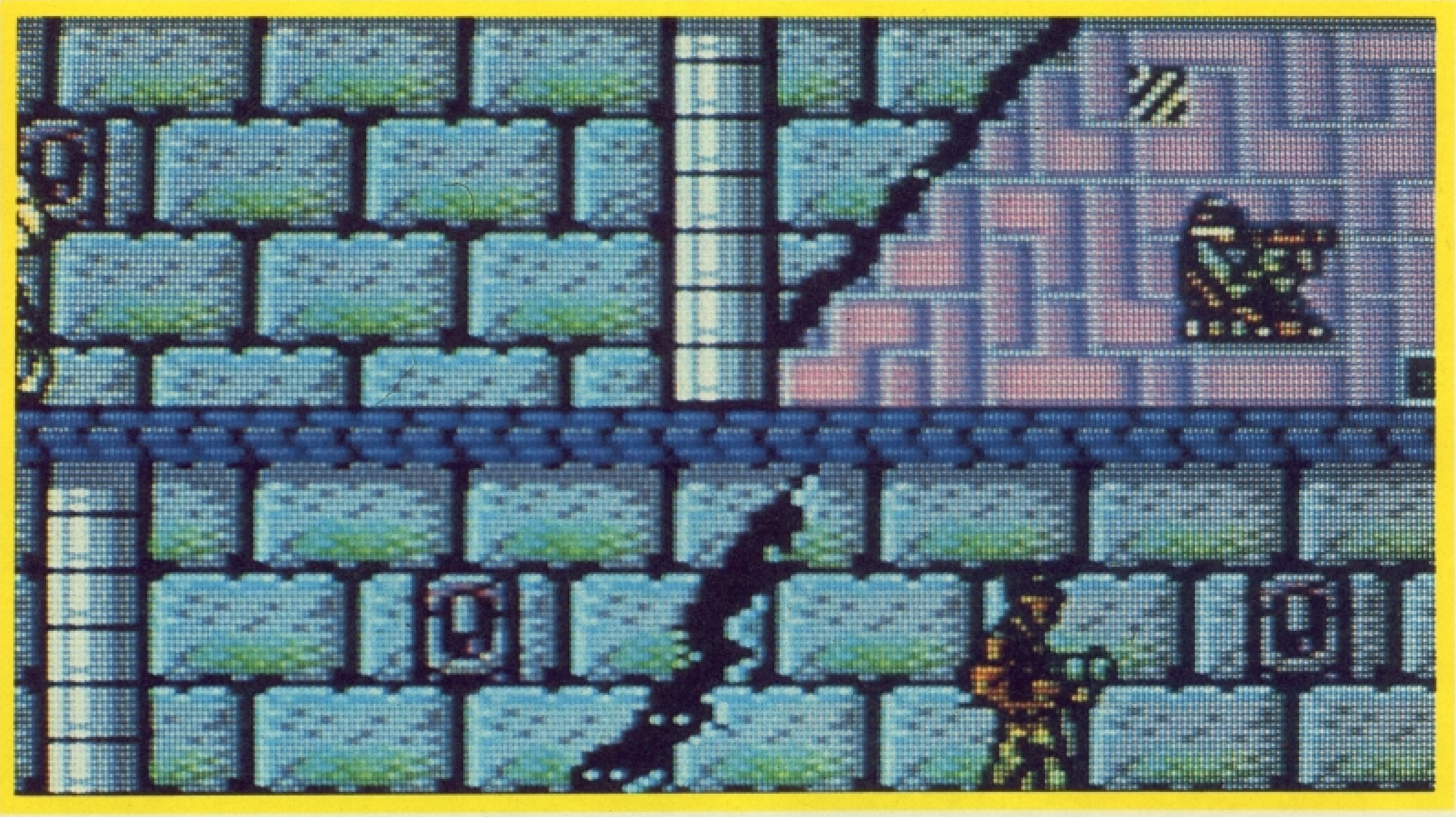
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The Vindicator is three games for the price of one, which usually means that one of them is passable and the other two are absolute dross. Not so with these three. Ocean have come up with a cracking combination of action, adventure and aliens, each one good enough and tough enough to keep you clamped to the joystick until well past your bedtime.

The first ordeal is a maze of mega proportions on four levels connected by lifts. The maze itself appears in a central play area with all your instrumentation arranged around the sides. As you'd expect things are depicted in fairly classy 3D vision with walls and doors to storerooms on either side of you. What's in the storerooms? For the

The Vindicator searches one of the many storerooms in level one.





Up and down the floors in level three.

most part they're occupied by some evil looking aliens. 'Vindication' consists of vapourising these ugly monsters with your blaster, whereupon you will discover one of three things in the goo on the floor.

It could be a life pass (very handy for inter-floor travel), ammunition cartridge (an essential for the indiscriminate blaster), or a computer pass. Computer passes are hard to come by because they are the key to completing the level. Once you have the pass you must go straight to a computer room where, if you have the right pass, you will be presented with an anagram to crack — usually not too tricky as they are all names of people that work at Ocean.

Once you have solved the anagram to the computer's satisfaction it will activate a bomb in one of the bomb rooms. When you have collected all the cards, cracked all the codes and killed all of the aliens, you've got it cracked. Oh, there's one thing I forgot to mention. The atmosphere in this place is pretty unsavoury so every now and then you have to chew on Oxygum, truly marvellous stuff which helps you to breathe. Plenty of oxygum can be found in storerooms about the place, the only problem is being close to one when you run low on air and start to choke to death. Although it's sad to lose a life, this is where the graphics really shine. The poor guy really looks like he's gasping for his last breath as he crumples to the floor. Needless to say a map is a really useful thing to have around.

That section shouldn't take more than a week or two to suss out, then you can move on to some outdoor pursuits. This is a bit *Commando*-like, but then why not? First you must attack from the air in your 1940's style bomber which is a little out of touch with the futuristic style of the rest of the game, but good fun nonetheless. The idea of the air attack is to bomb some of the obstructions which might get in the way when you return to your jeep and make a land-based assualt on the entrance to the catacombs.

To be honest, I have to say that this second section is the weakest of the three. Vertical scrolling and ping pong bullets are feeble at the best of times and this definitely needed something to liven it up, unfortunately there isn't anything, at least until section three appears on the horizon in the form of the entrance to the catacombs.

"Deep in the bowels of the Earth, the evil Gog awaits, surrounded by his mutant hordes, each intent on you destruction." Well, who am I to argue with that? The only part I can't testify to having seen with my own eyes is this Gog person, and having seen his cronies I can't say I'm sorry. Level three is fairly tricky, even by my own high personal standards. As with the other levels you get to start with three lives. If you're lucky they might last you as many minutes.

Once again the graphics are excellent. The mutant hordes really do look menacing — skeletal creatures and an assortment of insect-like things which come at you at a variety of heights so you constantly have to jump, duck, and run for cover to preserve your precious skin.

The catacombs are arranged on several levels connected by lifts. These ones work in a different way to those on the first section, you just hop on and up, or down, you go — handy for a fast escape from a tight corner.

The ultimate objective is to survive long enough to get face to face with this Gog bloke and blast him to bits. I can't say I made it myself, but according to eye witness accounts it is an awesome sight.

This could have been a Screen Star, maybe, but the middle section lets it down badly, which is a bit of a shame. It's not so much of a disaster as to ruin the whole thing — more what you might call two thirds of a really great game. But *Vindicator* is going to offer a really tough challenge to anyone, and for that reason it's great value for money.

Ken McMahon

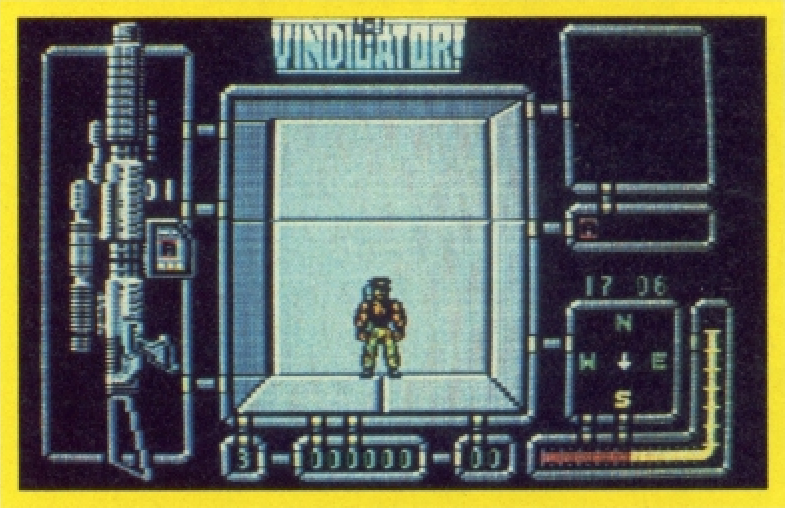
THE VINDICATOR — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

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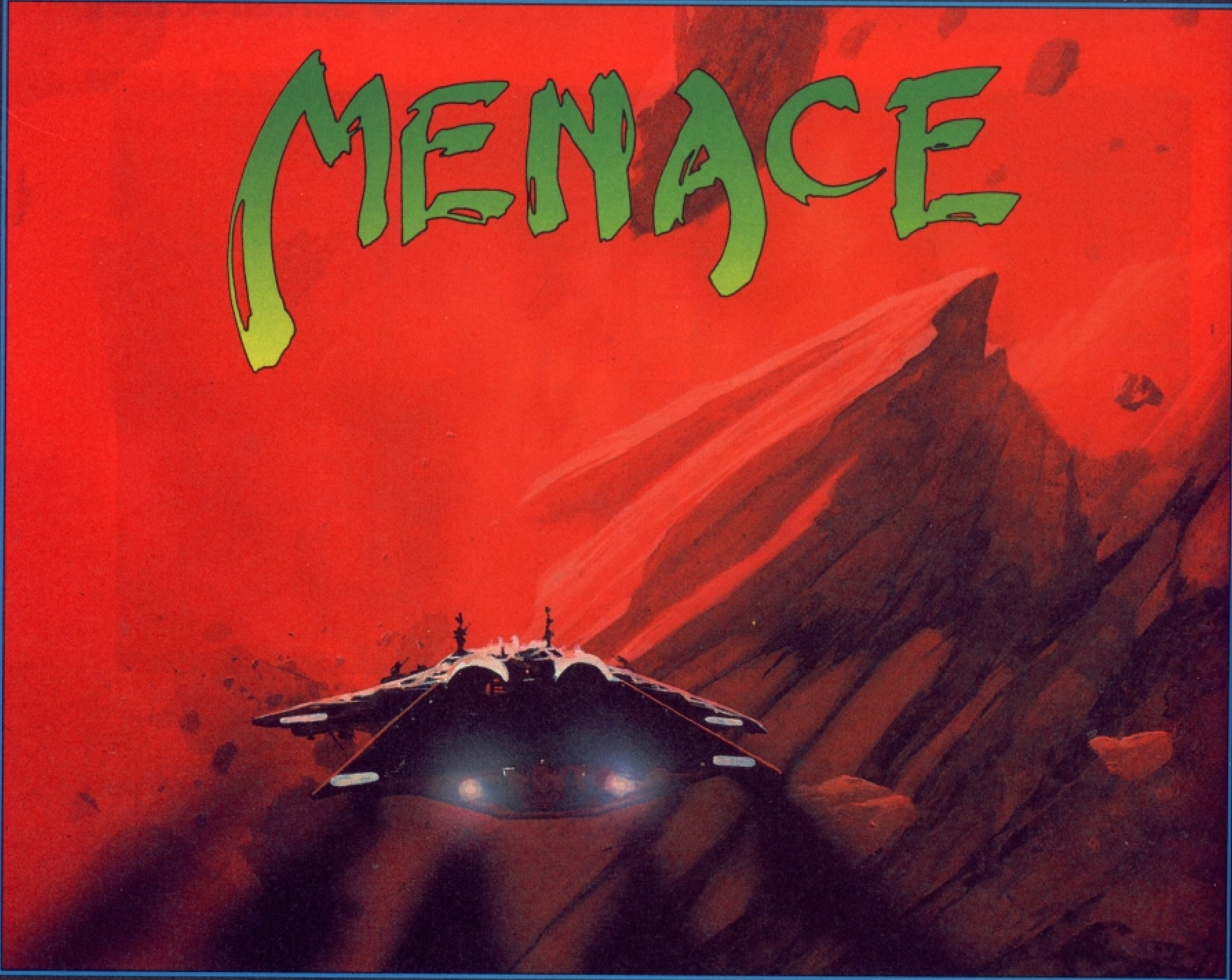
Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
VFM

CU RATING

8

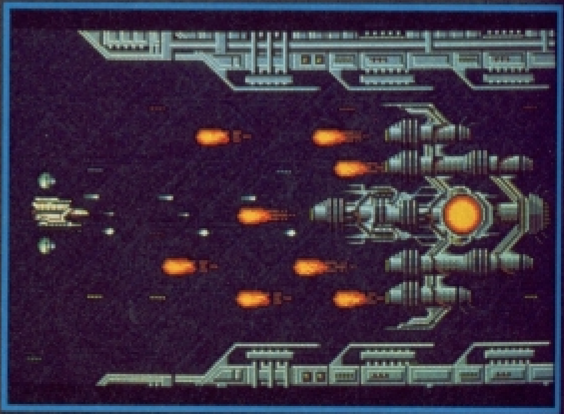


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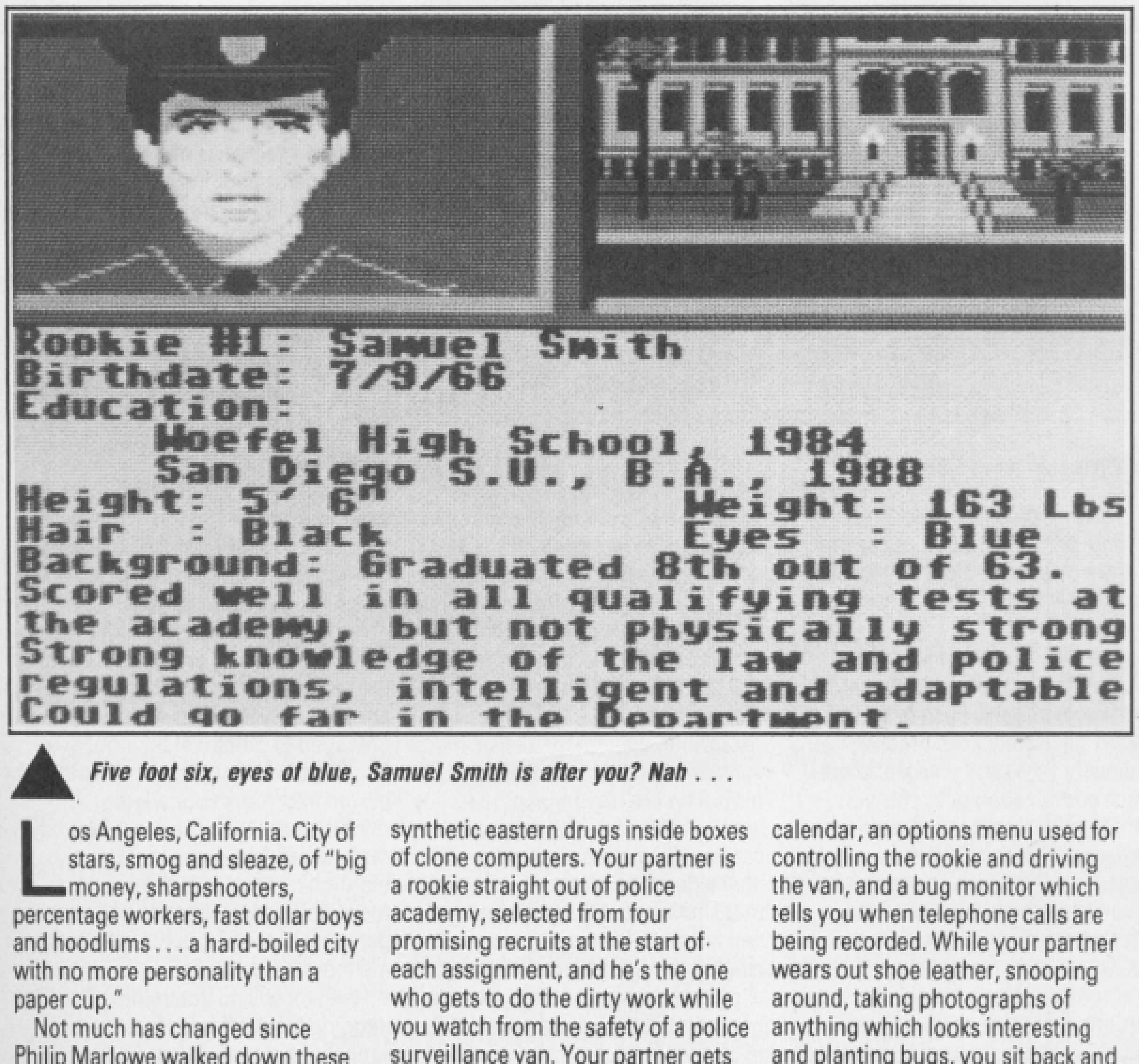
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L.A. crackdown

64/128
Epyx

Price:
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▲ ***Five foot six, eyes of blue, Samuel Smith is after you? Nah . . .***

Los Angeles, California. City of stars, smog and sleaze, of "big money, sharpshooters, percentage workers, fast dollar boys and hoodlums . . . a hard-boiled city with no more personality than a paper cup."

Not much has changed since Philip Marlowe walked down these streets 40 years ago; only now the cops stake-out in surveillance vans and the crooks smuggle dope inside motherboards and disk drives.

L.A. Crackdown is another game in the Epyx Masters Collection, 'so sophisticated they are recommended for the advanced game player', and if you think the snappy title suggests Crockett-and-Tubbs-type action then you're going to be seriously disappointed. This is plodding police routine at its most monotonous.

As an ace narcotics investigator for the LAPD, it's your job to break up a vice racket that's importing synthetic eastern drugs inside boxes of clone computers. Your partner is a rookie straight out of police academy, selected from four promising recruits at the start of each assignment, and he's the one who gets to do the dirty work while you watch from the safety of a police surveillance van. Your partner gets all the thrills, but you live longer.

The van's equipped with two video screens. On one you can watch the rookie as he enters buildings, searches rooms and engages in fruitless conversation with suspects. The other screen depicts the scene outside the van, and it's here that you'll see suspects arrive and depart in their cars. The van's also got a map display; this will either show your van moving around the streets of L.A., or your rookie's progress through any buildings which he enters.

The rest of the hi-tech gadgetry at your fingertips comprises a clock/calendar, an options menu used for controlling the rookie and driving the van, and a bug monitor which tells you when telephone calls are being recorded. While your partner wears out shoe leather, snooping around, taking photographs of anything which looks interesting and planting bugs, you sit back and try to make sense of the evidence — calling up police criminal records, reviewing photos and taped conversation, until, hopefully, a pattern emerges.

It all sounds very absorbing, but it's not. Most of the time you're parked outside the Pacific Shipping Company warehouse, the County airport, the downtown Sushi Bar or Patrick Sim's plush residence, just watching cars arrive and depart, and building up a daily timetable of the traffic. Or else your partner's searching the same rooms over and over again, waiting for some careless mobster to drop an incriminating document, or transferring the phone bugs from one location to another.

If you stick at this long enough — and we're talking weeks here, not days — you'll eventually collect some goodies: a despatch note, or a flight timetable, or even, if you're really lucky, a dead junkie. But it's unbelievably tedious, painstaking work, and work which makes no demands of deductive skills at all.

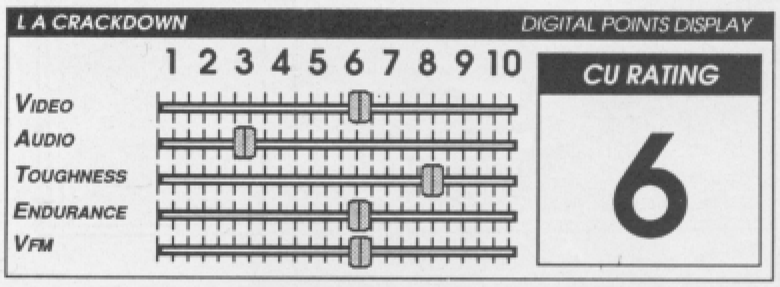
And what really gets on your nerves are the glaring inconsistencies which litter the program. Your rookie can be talking to a suspect on one video screen, while that same suspect can be seen driving off on the other screen. People arrive at buildings (especially the airport) only to vanish, or depart from locations which were previously deserted. You can tail shipping boss Patrick Sims with relative ease, but never follow his girlfriend Lisa. Why not?

Most of the characters seem to have only a limited vocabulary; if your partner runs into them more than two or three times they're apt to lock into dialogue you've already heard. At times this can be ridiculous, as when Sims finds your partner snooping around his office at 7.45am on a Sunday morning (suspicious, huh?) and instead of calling the guards he comes out with the same excessively polite speech that he's used on at least three previous encounters.

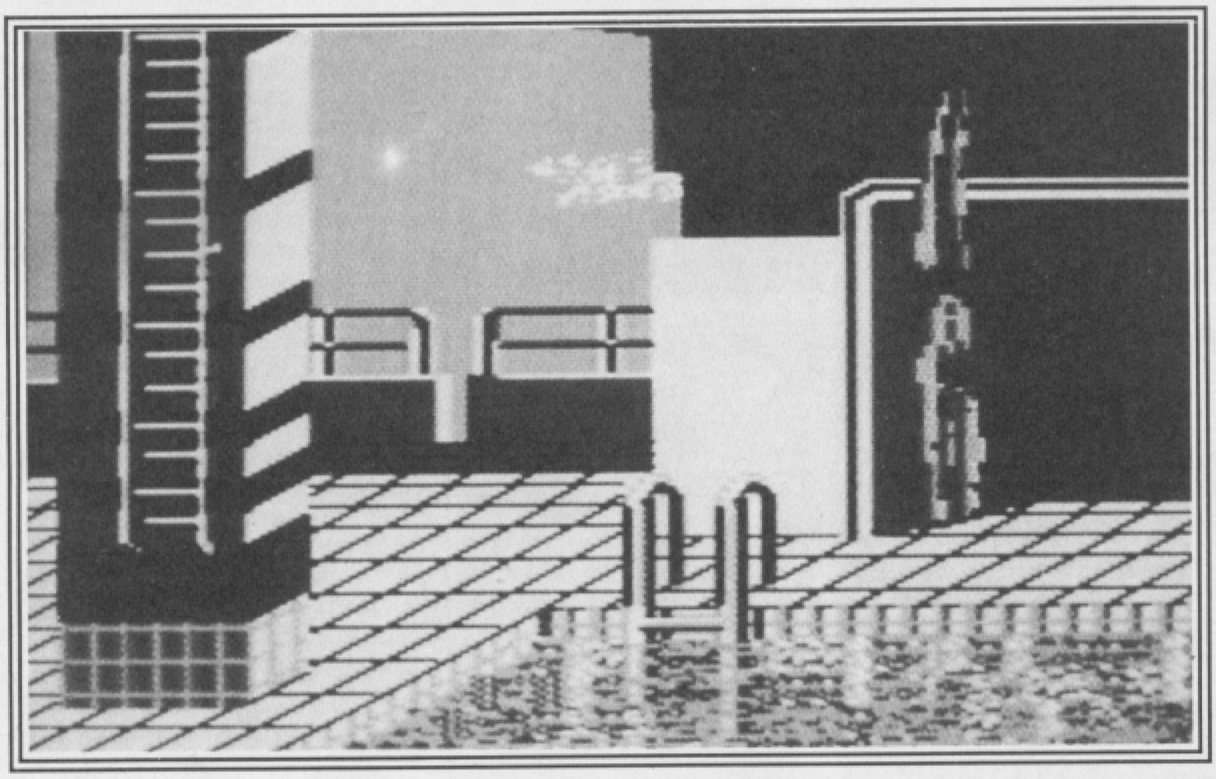
These idiosyncracies and others don't do much to create atmosphere, and what little there is gets ruined by blocky graphics and primitive sound effects. The playing area is small (only 4 buildings, with 24 locations in all) and the range of actions open to you and your partner is limited.

With a better script, more action, imaginative dialogue and more use made of the L.A. background, this game could have been twice as difficult as well as actually fun to play. The programmers should take a look at Mirrorsoft's brilliant *Intrigue* to see where they went wrong.

Bill Scolding



SUMMER OLYMPIAD



▲ No marks for difficulty as Summer Olympiad takes a dive?

64/128 Tynesoft Price: £9.95

If you can't afford the air fare to Seoul, the TV has been repossessed and the batteries in the radio have given up the ghost then you might consider passing the long evenings with Tynesoft's latest athletic endurance test, *Summer Olympiad. (Supposing not everyone had a monitor like you! Outraged. Ed).*

Tynesoft have tried to inject a spark of life into the old Olympic theme by introducing events like high diving, skeet shooting and fencing, which, although not entirely new are at least a little off the beaten track. Other events are hurdles, and triple jump.

Up to five can play, each player entering their name and nationality on the score board. Each event is loaded separately from the disk (tediously slow) and you can select which combination of events you want to try at this stage. Graphically speaking, all of this is very impressive. You click on a monitor screen to select an event and the film starts running. If you select all five events, plus the opening ceremony you can have six screens all running at once showing hurdlers hurdling, divers diving, fencers fencing and so on. While this is all good fun to look at, it's not much use of course, unless, that is, you're suffering from temporary amnesia and can't for the moment remember what the 100 metres hurdles involves.

Assuming you opt for all five events the first up is skeet shooting. This is a bit like clay pigeon shooting. There are two traps and occasionally the skeets come from either side of the screen at the same time. That's about the only time you need to worry. It's simply a case of lining up the cross hairs directly in the path of the skeet, waiting for the right moment then gently squeezing the trigger.

Next up is fencing in which you get a pretty good 3D view of the proceedings from a corner of the auditorium ceiling. Your man prances up and down the track from the left, your opponent from the right. Behind each of you trails the wire which will carry the tell-tale electronic signal should either of you take a direct hit in the nipple. The moves are a bit on the simple side, ripost, parry and thrust, oh, and for when things get really bad — run away.

I was looking to follow a disappointing fencing result with some real strong stuff in the triple jump. Everything was going nicely as I worked up a steady wiggle rhythm on the joystick. But disaster struck at the line when cramp caused me to hold on to the fire button too long. A ninety degree take off angle not only doesn't get you very far, it looks pretty stupid. By the third attempt I'd perfected my technique enough to get me a respectable twenty odd metres (very odd) and the Gold medal. But I was the only competitor.

Worse things were to come in the high diving. I didn't score at all until about the sixth attempt. The problem, I reckon is more to do with a bug and/or poor instructions than poor technique. You can take off forwards or backwards, do forward or backward rolls and spin left or right. But half way between the board and the water isn't the best time to discover that left spin or backward roll doesn't work. What's more I would have thought a forward roll immediately followed by a backward roll was a physical impossibility, not with this. Further experimentation got me a mediocre average score of 2.5 out of 10. Nice to see several women and a black judge on the panel though.

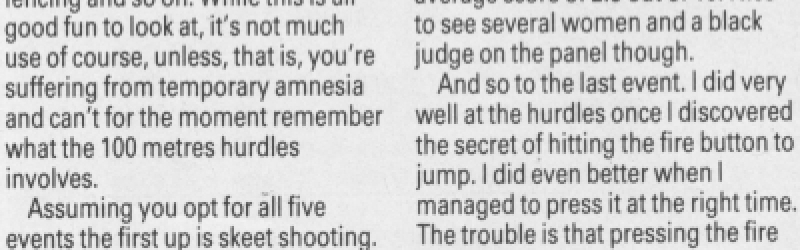
And so to the last event. I did very well at the hurdles once I discovered the secret of hitting the fire button to jump. I did even better when I managed to press it at the right time. The trouble is that pressing the fire button interrupts your wiggle rhythm and hitting those hurdles really slows you down, not to mention hurting your shins. Still room for improvement on a personal best of 14.85 though. Pass me the steroids Reg.

Tynesoft will no doubt thing I'm slagging them off from force of habit, but the truth is that *Summer Olympiad* is just too simple and adds nothing to the *Summer Games / Daley's Decathlon* genre. This one gets no medals from me.

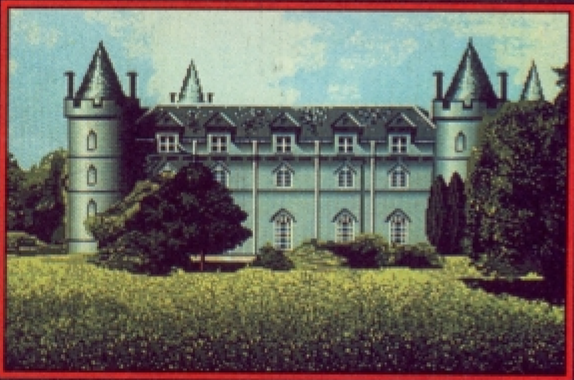
Ken McMahon



◀ But what about the crowd?

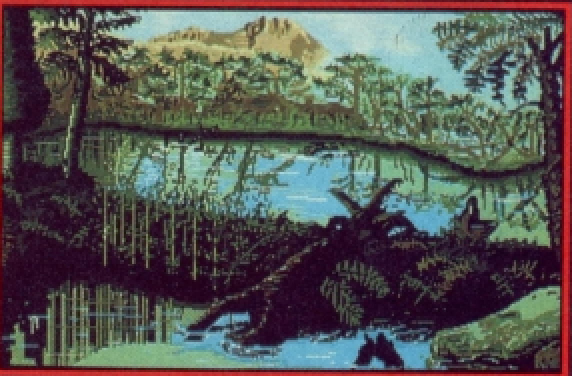


CHRONO QUEST



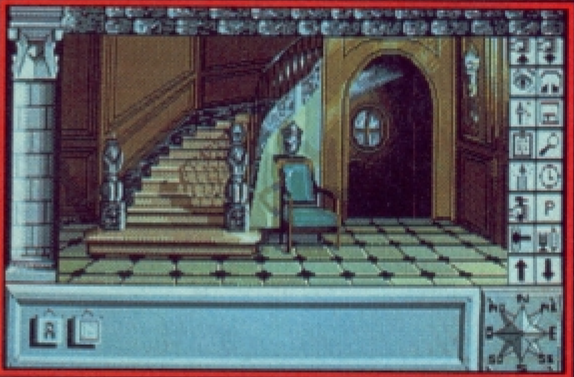






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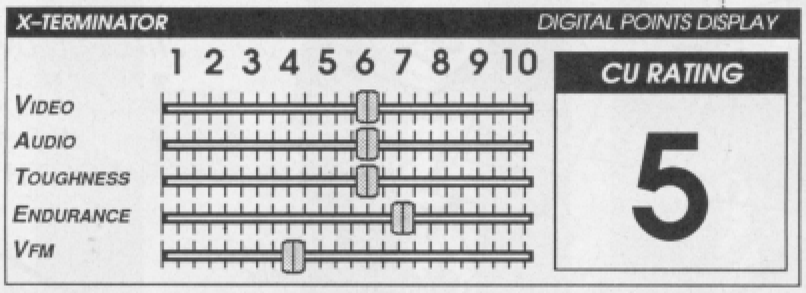
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X-TERMINATOR

64/128
Novagen/
Quantum Design

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The unusually quiet Birmingham-based Novagen have broken their software silence to release the first game from new software house Quantum Design.

Set in deep space, the game takes you on a mission to destroy a nest of alien Bio-morphs, which have infested and destroyed most of the humanoid colonies throughout the inhabited Galaxy.

You play Jald Ray, a man with a silly name and rookie member of an elite band of space commandos, called the X-Terminators, who is sent into the complex which has been singled out as the source of the xenomorph menace. Rav the rookie is controlled by walking left and right. Pushing up on the joystick initiates his jetpack, while pulling down halts his ascent, causes him to kneel, or gets him to lie down, depending on the current situation.

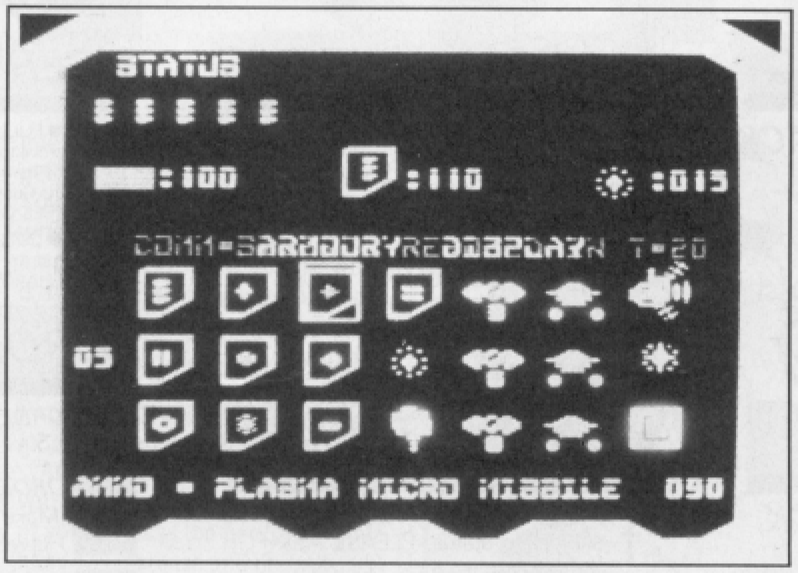
The complex interior is set over 15 levels, each of which takes up six screens, and these scroll past in eight directions as Rav moves around. The immediate aim is to negotiate the level, which involves the destruction of energy barriers using grenades. Collect the remaining colonists who are attached to the walls and floor by alien secretions (bleah!), and then head for the elevator shaft which allows access to the next level. All this has to be done while avoiding or blasting the hovering aliens which metamorphose into their increasingly more powerful forms if left alone.

At the end of each level, you have the option to improve your current armoury by having extra equipment or ammunition beamed down to you. The available weaponry includes more powerful ammo, different firearms, and shields of varying strengths. The more powerful (and hence generally useful) items require more energy to beam them down. Hence the more energy you have left at the end of the level, the better the equipment available. Also, the correct selection of arms helps progress: choosing the most devestating weapon isn't necessarily the best tool for the job.

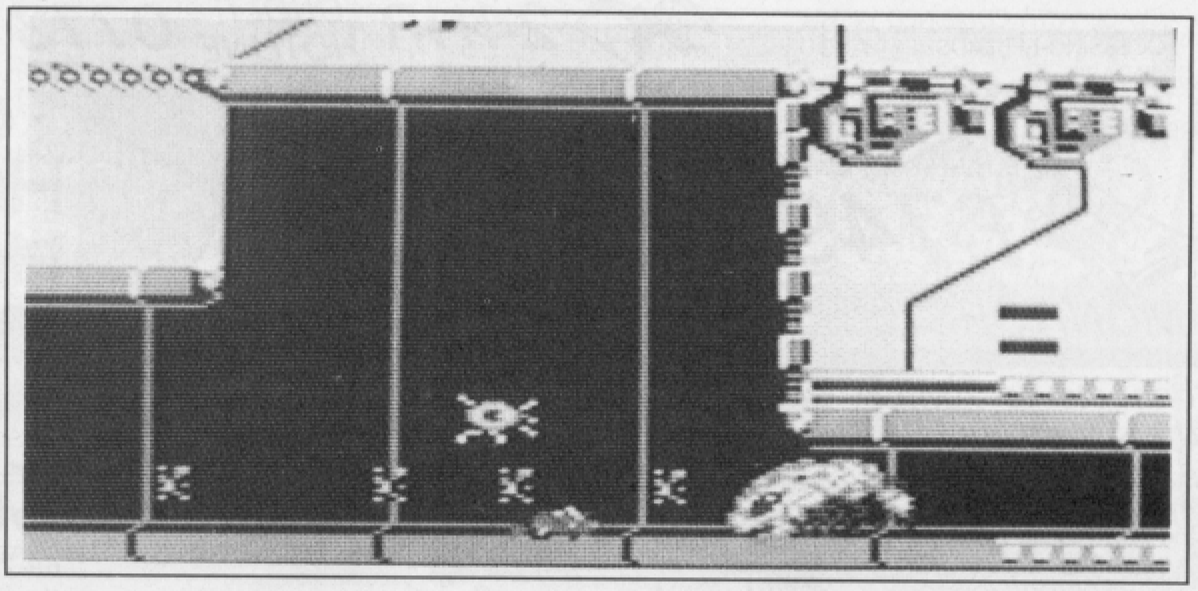
As soon as I heard the name Novagen, my interest was aroused. Their previous releases have always been something special. Unfortunately, I can only admit to disappointment over their latest acquisition. It has no technical advances (not even multiplexed sprites), the graphics are bland (they don't change drastically until level 15!) and the gameplay is staid and uninteresting. I found the 'strategic' weapon selection to be a shallow but necessary chore. *X-Terminator* is a *very* average game. Coming from Novagen — and at ten quid — I expect something a little more than that. It's also a level multiload — God knows why: there are only about 80 screens in total, none of which vary that much from the previous ones.

Steve Jarratt

Select a weapon.



What a monstrous mess, and the game's not a lot better!



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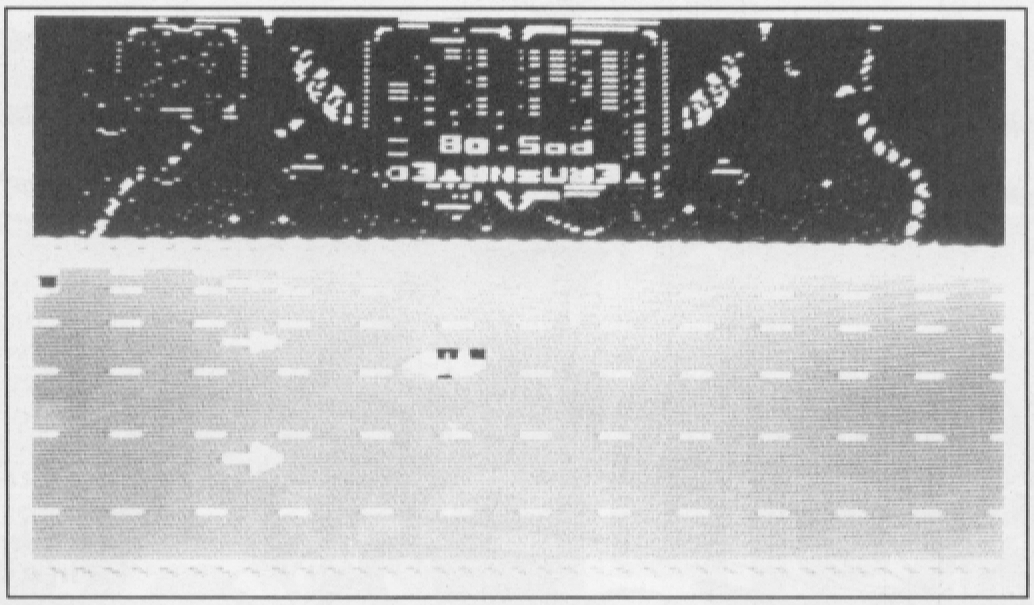
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THE FURY

God, you can really tell when it's summer. People like Martech start releasing games like *The Fury*. They obviously called it that because they knew that you'd be furious when you discovered what you'd paid £9.99 for.

The Fury is one of those five year old race games where you drive a little car along a little track running from left to right on the screen. Occasionally other cars get in the way and you have to drive around them. One other distraction is provided to make life a bit more interesting – you can shoot the other cars. The whole thing is jazzed up in a load of hype about 'Rim Races', – pseudo sci-fi bilge which is about as interesting to read as Mike Gatting's autobiography.

What happens is this: you start off with the basic model which travels at moderate speed, has moderate brakes and moderate everything else. The first race is a straightforward time trial in which you have to beat the clock without crashing into the other cars too much, losing your shield and dying. The second race is like the first one only longer. It took me a long while to get past this stage because I kept exploding, apparently because my shield had given out, or so it said. It took some time for me to realise that it wasn't the shield, I had run out of fuel and, as every good mechanic knows, when you run out of fuel your car explodes.

The reason for the fuel/shields misunderstanding is that the instrumentation is so badly designed you can't read it. You can't read it with a magnifying glass with the colour low and the contrast at minimum so what chance do you stand when you're doing 300mph with cars all around you?

The thing to do, if you're interested, is top up with fuel and get the car repaired after every race. You do this on the equipment screen which you need to visit for ammunition for the third race which is a 'killer'. Providing you can afford it – you get prize money for completing a race – you can top up with bullets, missiles, flame throwers and even an escape pod for dire emergencies.

As you progress through the races you will earn money and as a result of your success the bounty on your head will increase and life will become more difficult. To offset the increased hazard you can buy extra souped-up hot rods with go-faster stripes and all that kind of gear. The graphics are so vague they all look pretty much alike.

In short, this is a load of you known what. Unless you've got a monitor you probably won't be able to see quite how bad it is, which I would consider an advantage.

Ken McMahon

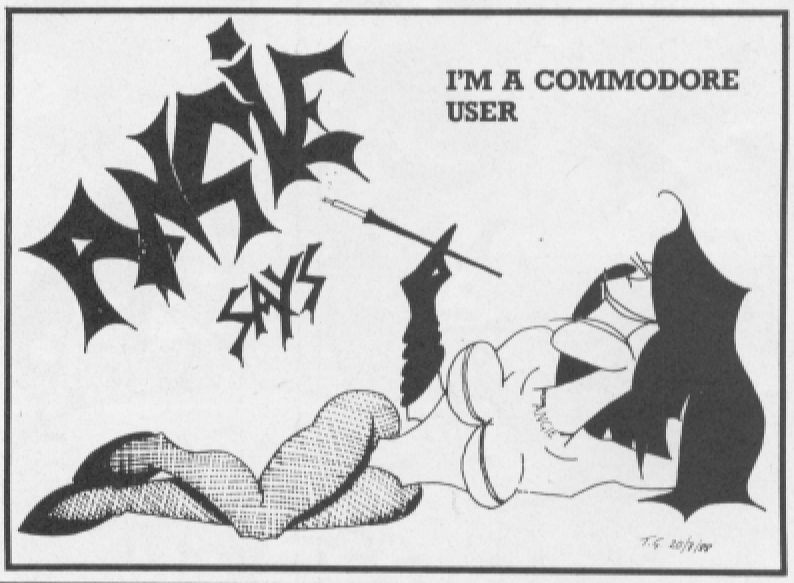
THE FURY — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

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CU RATING

3





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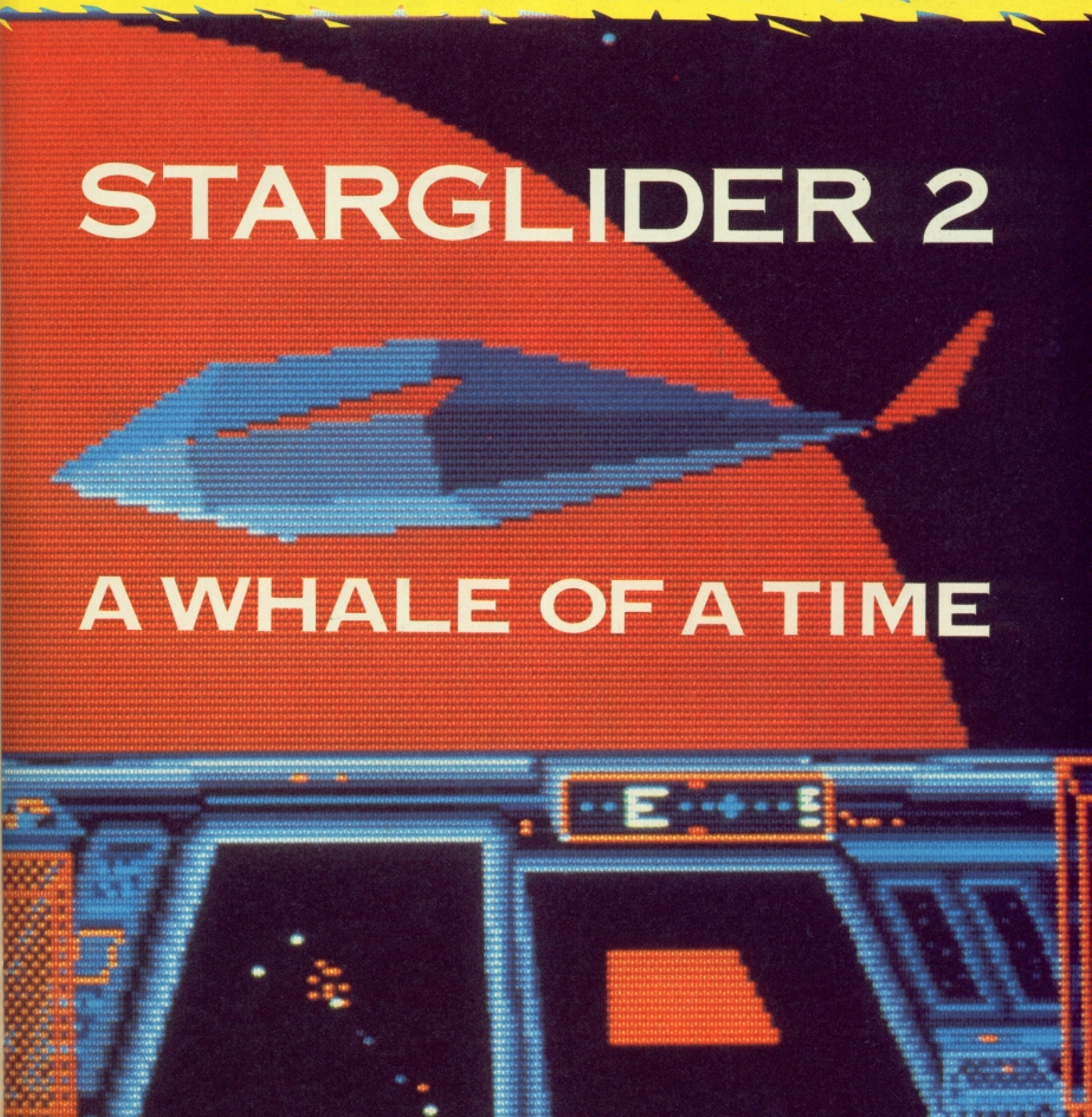


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AMIGA EXTRA



STARGLIDER 2

A WHALE OF A TIME

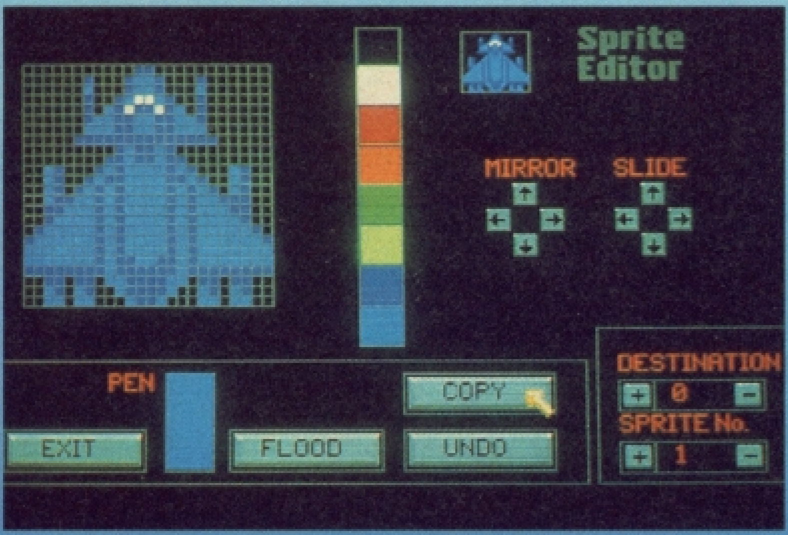
REVIEWS: BIONIC COMMANDOS
STAR-RAY BOMBJACK
INTERCEPTOR TIPPED



MAFDET

Blimey, these new 16-bit softcos are springing up faster than Gary Penn's newly-shorn hair. Software Horizons, who are based in Colney Hatch, will be taking a stand at the PC Show and have just announced the impending launch of a trio of Amiga games, one of which is this ancient Egyptian romp. In *Mafdet* you play the Egyptian Cat Goddess of the same name, With the power to transmute from human to cat form and back. You've got to search the land of Egypt and the Underworld for the all-powerful Book Of The Dead. Based on a genuine ancient Egyptian myth, Mafdet will have you solving puzzles as well as leaping about the place in your dual forms — it'll be coming your way this Autumn.

FUTURE AMIGA PREV



BARBARIAN II

There's nothing yer average journo enjoys more than hacking. We don't mind hacking out copy, sometimes, when we have to (that's what we're paid for, theoretically). We're very fond of hacking good names and reputations into pieces. But, at least up here in CU Towers, the kind of hacking which appeals to us most of all is the kind provided by Palace's *Barbarian* and its fab sequel, *Barbarian II*. Well, now — or within a mere matter of weeks anyway — you'll be able to *"Prepare To Dieeee"* and *"Hyyukkk"* to your hearts' content on the Amiga too, as you make your way through dungeons, past sabre-toothed tigers, ogres and assorted slimey things, towards the ultimate showdown with the dastardly Drax. Hack to the future, indeed.



SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT

Those Amiga owners who've long envied their 64-using brothers' and sisters' ability to develop their very own personalised shoot 'em ups with the brilliant Sensible Software program, *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit* (*SEUCK* to its friends) need seethe no longer. By October an Amiga version should be on the shelves courtesy of Richard Linefeller on Palace's subsidiary label, Outlaw. So now those who've been complaining about a lack of real quality shoot 'em ups on 16-bit can put their money where their mouths are, buy this and do it themselves.



ATF

A huge hit with flight sim fans on its 64 release earlier this year, Digital Integration's *ATF* (standing for Advanced Tactical Fighter) is set for take-off on the Mean Machine. Based on what has been described as "the most technologically advanced aircraft of the 1990's", *ATF* puts you in the cockpit of a mid-air miracle of aviation design, featuring an electronic co-pilot which gives the pilot automatic target recognition, threat evaluation and mission tactical planning. "So what's left for us to do?", we hear several plaintive simmaniacs ask. Plenty, we're realiably informed.

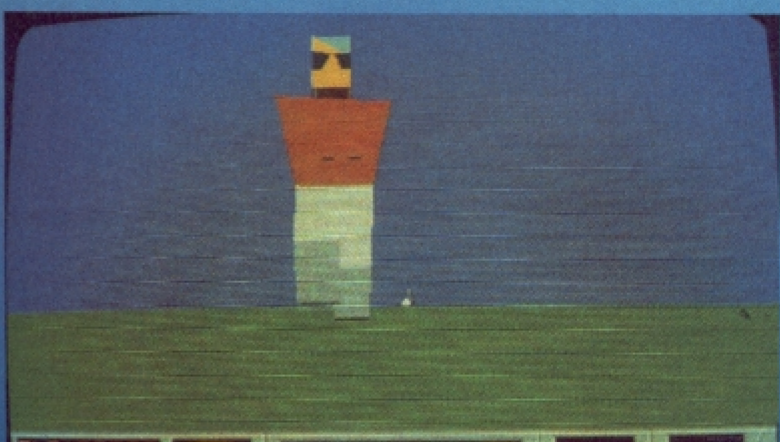
E SHOCK

VIEW AMIGA

SIEGE ON LONDON

Frankly, summer in London is often a wee bit hot and sticky. But at least the capital has remained remarkably free from alien attack. Or had until CRL decided to weigh into the 16-bit market with *Siege On London*, that is. Seems that the City of whom one never tires of (unless one's tired with life itself, of course) has been beset by aliens who've surrounded the whole place with a force field. And you, naturally, have to move in, blast every monster and machine you encounter, and liberate the city once more. With some rather nifty solid 3D graphics and a rather novel scenario, *Siege On London* is coming your way this October or thereabouts.





WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH

Hot (well, warmish) on the heels of Melbourne House's first two J.R. Tolkien licences, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Shadows of Mordor* comes *War in Middle Earth*. This time it's not a straight text-input adventure as it's predecessors were, but an arcade-adventure that looks a wee bit like that jolly Microillusions title *The Faery Tale Adventure*. Boasting all your favourite characters from the books and over 10,000 digitised backdrops, the game sends you on a mission to bring the all-powerful Ring to Mount Doom in the heart of Mordor to destroy it. According to the enthusiastic blurb, you'll be stunned by cinema quality animation, amazing sounds and over 150 interactive characters. A Tolkein fan's dream come true? Find out this Summer.

WHIRLIGIG

Amiga
Firebird
Price:
£19.95 disk

Whirligig is the story of a ship with brains and a pilot with none. Point number 1: there are well over 4,000,000,000 so called eigenspaces which can be accessed via the old faithful stargates. Point 2: out of these eigenspaces you only need to visit five. In these five locations exist the perfect solids (a cube, a tetrahedron, a dodecahedron, an octahedron and a icosahedron) you need to complete this game.

The first game screen is a map which displays the various stargates, their routes and any other satelites in the eigenspace. There ensues a two minute wait while, presumably, the computer sets the area up. Then the game starts in earnest and the whole universe springs from the centre of the screen. At this point on the early eigenspaces it's a quick dash to the nearest stargate and the next eigenspace. But as you get to the higher spaces fuel starts to run out, and enemy craft attack and deplete your weapon supplies. Luckily base ships are to be found floating peaceably around certain areas of space. There are only three different base ships for the two types of weapons and fuel and they can only be found in certain eigenspaces so it can involve a lot of sidetracking before you can top your supplies up.

The solids are contained in spaces 6, 28, 496, 8128 and 33550336. Thankfully Firebird supply two possible routes to the last solid otherwise you could be left hanging around for a heck of long time. Finding the first solid is no problem, the second is none too hard either but then the enemy ships start to become more devious and fly up from the bottom of the screen which means they spend half their time cleverly hidden by the ship's control panel should you have it raised. Sneaky.

To deal with the enemy you have four chaff pods and a number of heat seeking missiles.

The enemy 'spacers' are done out in very nice solid 3D like your craft only they tend to be a lot nippier and consequently ram your ship leaving a mass of engines, capsules and toilet rolls. One of the most impressive technical effects comes at the start and end of an area where the universe implodes or explodes depending on whether you're going in or out of space.

The control method really got me though. A continuous spin is induced by moving the mouse either left or right. Thrust is gained by moving the mouse forward and missiles are launched with a deft stroke of the mouse button. Grasping the little rodent in my left hand I promptly executed a series of dazzling twists and turns that would make a no-legged elephant look overly graceful. After several hours of play my prowess with the control method enabled me to find the first stargate which I immediately rammed. Although it's fiddly the control method is well suited to the game, if it was any easier then alien bashing would just be an unnecessary waste of time. With the mouse it proves to be more of a challenge.

Whirligig could be subtitled *Looking For a Needle In a Haystack Simulator*, if there was more to do then I could have given a higher mark but with a total lack of real fun objectives *Whirlygig* stumbles, falls and lands smack on its nose.

Mark Patterson

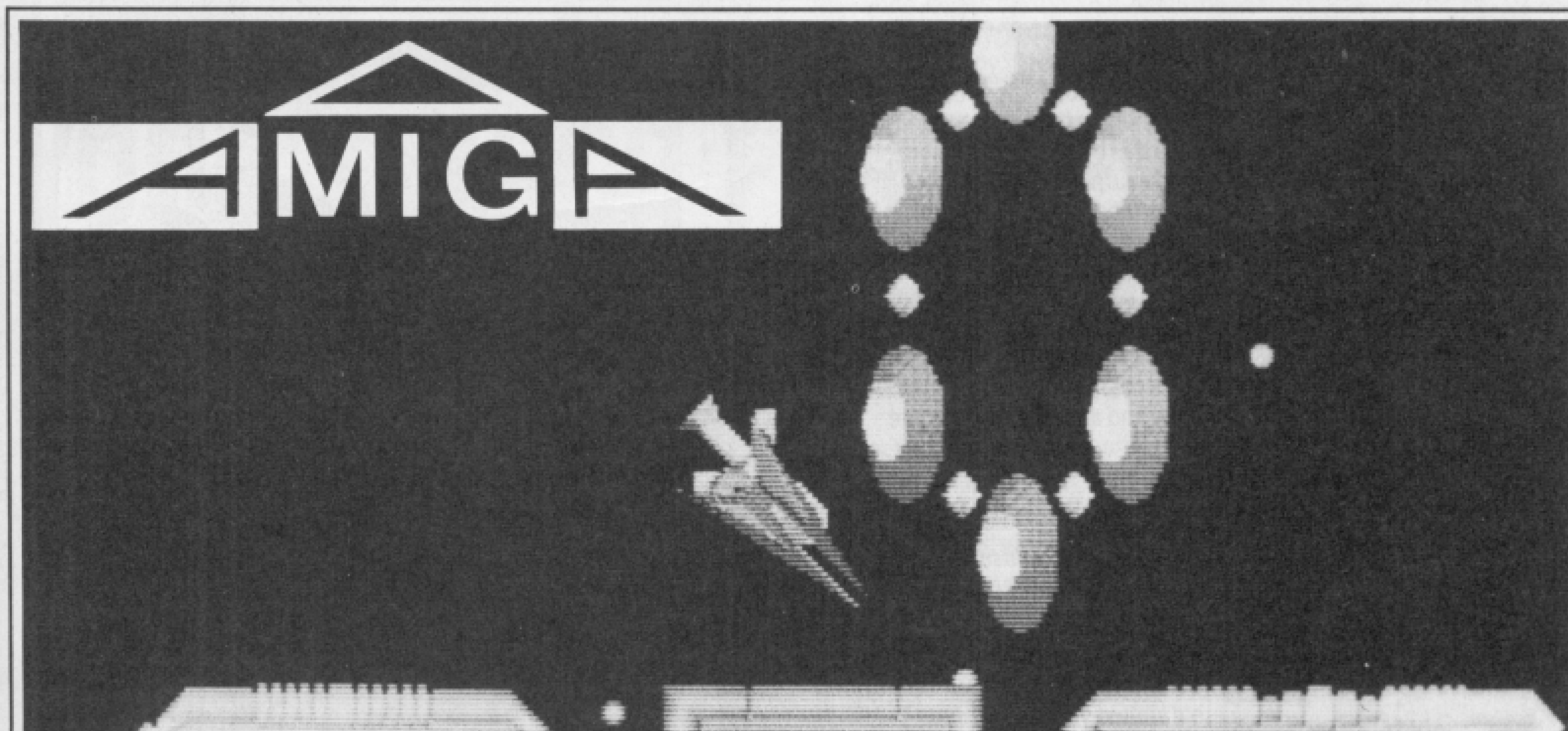
WHIRLIGIG — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

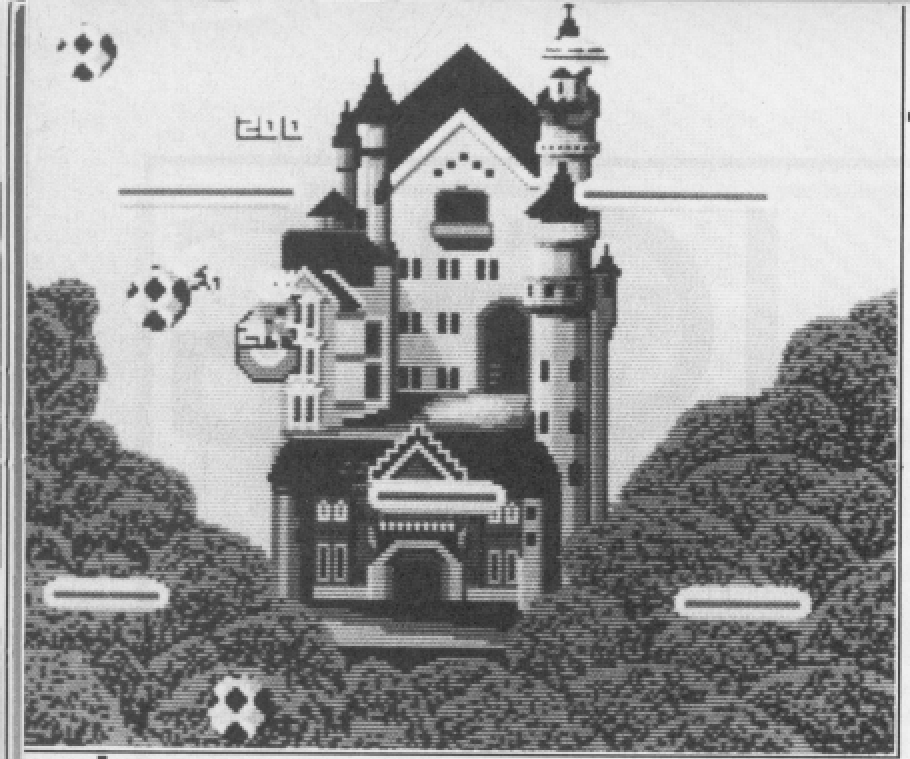
VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

4



Wowza! A flying tuning fork.



BOMB JACK

AMIGA

Amiga
Elite
Price: £24.95

Out of all the 8-bit titles to be caught up in Elite's Amiga conversion frenzy (currently in full swing), *BombJack* has to be the oldest. It was released simply *aaages* ago, and the original coin-op is practically a fossil. Nevertheless, it still retains its playability.

Now we have an Amiga version too, and it's not bad at all. Jack is yer average bomb diffusion expert caught up in a strange parallel universe inhabited by a rather motley band of metallic nasties who don't take kindly to his presence. Donning his mask, cape and boots, Jack decides to deactivate all the bombs that litter each screen.

Each screen is set against a picturesque-backdrop (Level one is a Sphinx, level two a Greek monument and so on) and each has five or so short platforms in different positions. Jack can run left and right along these platforms, and by hitting the fire button he can leap into the air and up the screen. There are about 20 bombs to a level, and Jack can collect these simply by colliding with them. If you're a smartarse bonus freak you can collect them in the correct order. You do this by collecting the one with the burning fuse, another will start burning, which you should go for next and so on.

The only thing that stands between you and lots of juicy points are the nasties on each screen. All of them seem to be made of metal (they're coloured silver and grey mainly) and are all rather strange looking. There are spacemen, birds, whirling balls, spaceships and so on.

Jack refuses to bomb out.

What they look like isn't really important though, as all are equally lethal should you touch them. Nasties tend to appear at the top of the screen and slowly make their way to the bottom, where they mutate into a different creature. As there can often be around eight or nine marauding mateys on screen at any time, things can get pretty hectic.

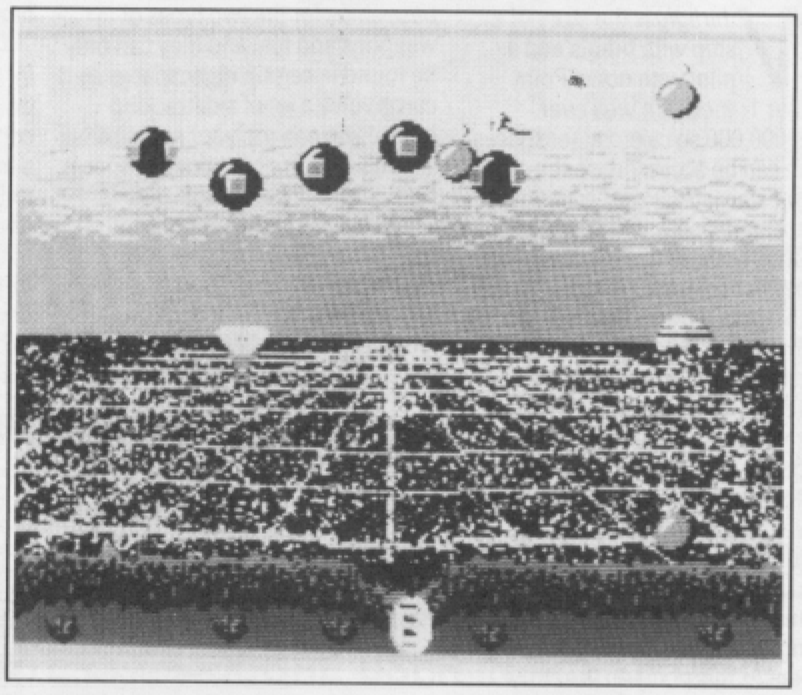
Jack, Jack, Jack your body.

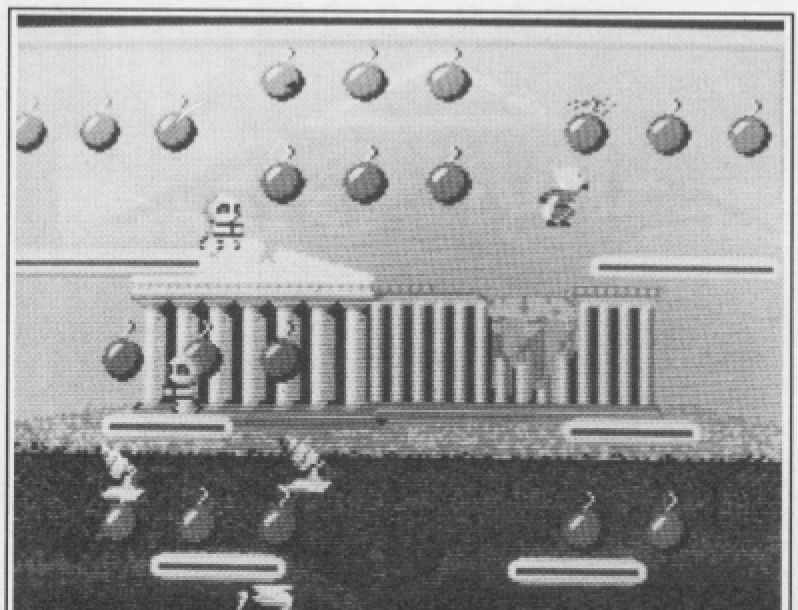
As luck would have it, every now and then a power-up capsule appears for your use. A 'B' capsule will bump your score up for every bomb you defuse, while a 'P' has the effect of turning all enemies on the screen into little coins, which can give you a breather and boost your score if you collect them. An 'E' is well worth an extra life.

The problem with *BombJack* is that the graphics and sound are nowhere near the quality that they should have been. The Amiga is quite capable of producing graphics as good as an ancient arcade machine, so why doesn't it? The sprites are too small and not detailed enough, while the backdrops are too simplistic to have any real impact. The sound is not much better, comprising an irritating high-pitched tune and dreary effects. Why then, you ask, did I say that it wasn't bad? Well it's the gameplay that saves *BombJack* from obscurity. The feel of the coin-op is there, as is the frustration when you accidentally plough into an enemy and lose your last life just as you were about to beat the high score. The game is fun from beginning to end, although it almost borders on *Thundercats*-style frustratability.

Gary Whitta

Jack gets jilted.





BOMBJACK — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	
AUDIO	
TOUGHNESS	
ENDURANCE	
VFM	

CU RATING

6



YOUR SEARCH FOR THE ULTIMATE IN ENTERTAINMENT........ENDS HERE

A bead of sweat gently strokes your brow. Fingers tortured with anticipation. Eyes riveted to the screen. Nothing can stop you now. The record score is one carefully aimed F16 missile away. Ready. Aim. Fire!

Oh no! ...... missed.

If you live and breathe Personal Computers there's one event that shouldn't be missed.
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COU

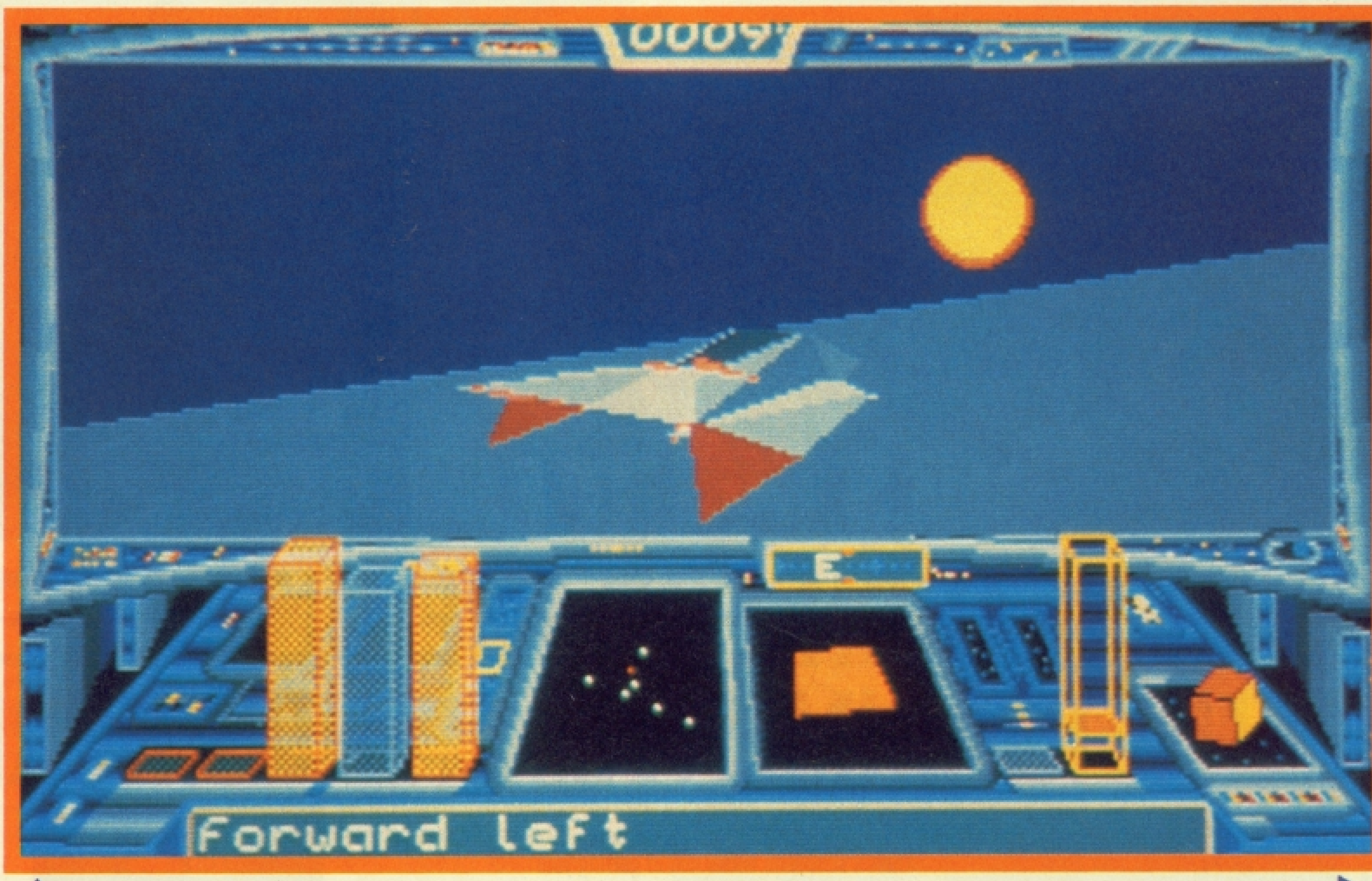
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STARG

AMIGA

Rainbird Price: £24.95 disk



Heading towards a moon.

A walker appears stage left.



Following their success with *Starglider* — one of the first serious 16-bit games — Jez Sans and his Argonaut software team have since been busy with its sequel, not surprisingly entitled *Starglider 2*.

This latest mission takes place within the confines of a neighbouring star system — a collection of five planets and their moons, circling the star Solice.

The Egrons have invaded the nearby Solice system, captured all of its planets and are currently engaged in the construction of a giant plasma beam weapon in orbit around Q-Beta, the lone moon of the fifth planet, Aldos.

To protect this giant construction, the Egrons are also building a series of smaller beam weapons on each of the seven moons of Millway — gas giant and fourth planet of the system.

Jaysan, Katra and the slightly deranged Argo set forth to Solice in the Icarus (so named because whenever you fly too near to the star Solice, the ship melts and the control panel drips down the screen in a very realistic manner!).

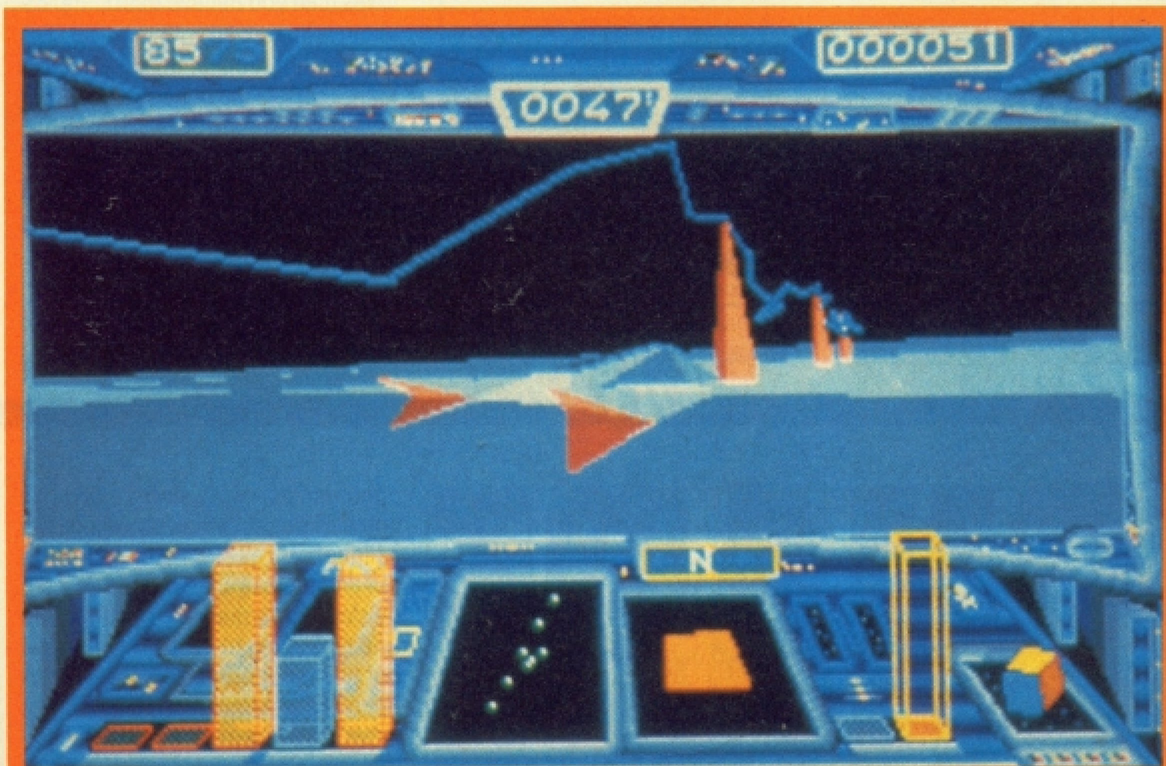
The remaining Solician forces have taken refuge in the labyrinth of tunnels that dissect several of the planets and moons of the system. Several underground research establishments are still in existence and the intrepid threesome must make contact with the Solicians, help them to build a Neutron Bomb and blow the beam weapon to atoms before it does the same to Novenia.

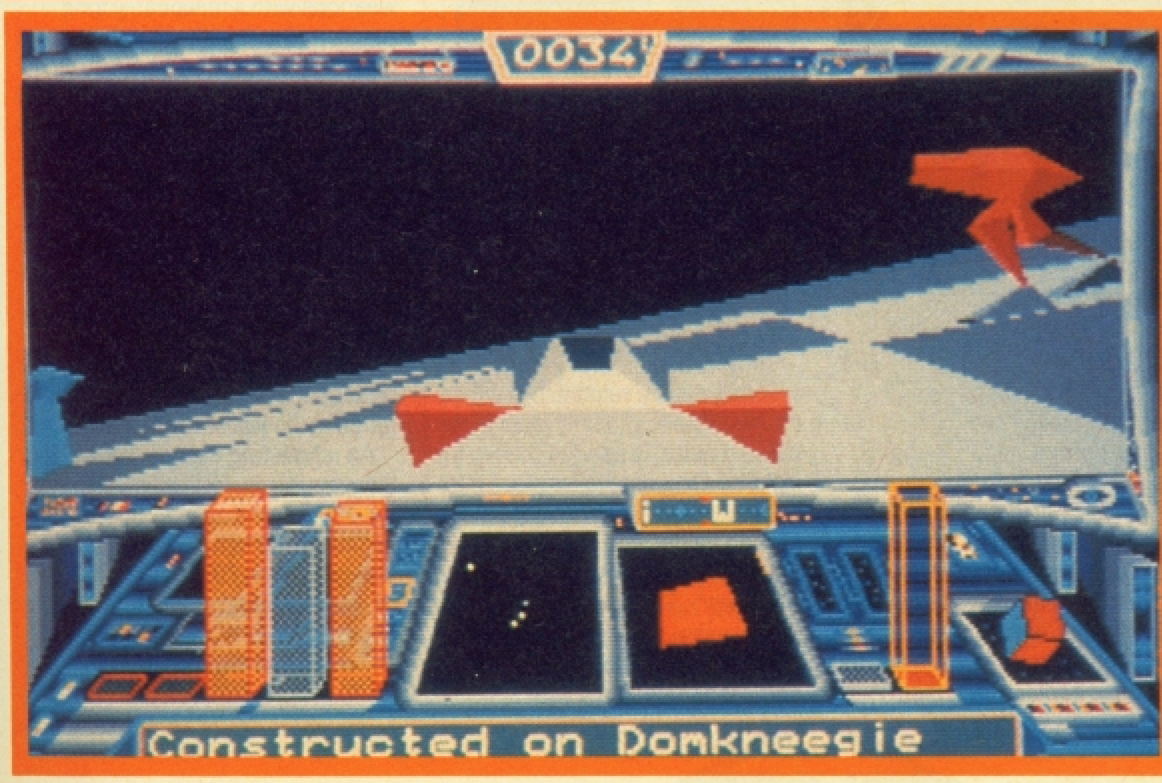
What at first appears to be quite a complex scenario soon boils down to little more than a scavenger hunt of interplanetary proportions: the necesssary components must be found and ferried to the research depot on Apogee, where the bomb is to be built. These include such

STARGLIDER II	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY
VIDEO	10
AUDIO	9
TOUGHNESS	7
ENDURANCE	8
VFM	8
CU RATING	9

GLIDER 2

Following the oscillating power lines.





strange requests as a flat diamond, an Egron mini-rocket and a case of Vistan wine!

Due to weight restrictions, the Icarus is defenceless save for a pair of forward-firing gas plasma lasers. However, the ship contains specially designed armament slots which allow the ship's hardware to be increased at will. A range of extra equipment can be added, including homing missiles, bouncing bombs (which are used to destroy the protective beam weapons on Millway's moons) and Projected Time-Warp Cuboids, which send enemy craft back in time about a second, causing them to collide with themselves! All these defence systems are available from technical depots on the moons of Millway, but, as always, you don't get something for nothing: the Solicians won't cough up a bouncing bomb until you provide them with a mechanical whale, and so on.

The craft is also self-sufficient as regards re-fuelling: additional energy may be obtained from a variety of sources, including arcing powerlines, gaseous volcanic emissions, methane asteroids and even from the plasma discharges of Solice itself. In practice, all these methods are as tricky as they sound, but once mastered are more or less the key to success: immediate danger is only provided by a dwindling energy supply and failing shields. Oh yes, I forgot to mention: in amongst all this you have to run the gauntlet of bloodthirsty space pirates and about a million Egron combat craft . . .

The accompanying novella is a humourous and vital read, containing information necessary to complete the mission.

Whatever the strengths or shortcomings of the gameplay, though, the real star of the show has to be the filled-in 3D vector graphics. The static pictures included here look impressive but do little to convey the speed and smoothness at which they move; at times they can be quite breathtaking. My favourite is the Icarus' death sequence: as the ship explodes into an expanding ball of debris, your viewpoint constantly pans around, creating an amazing feeling of depth and realism.

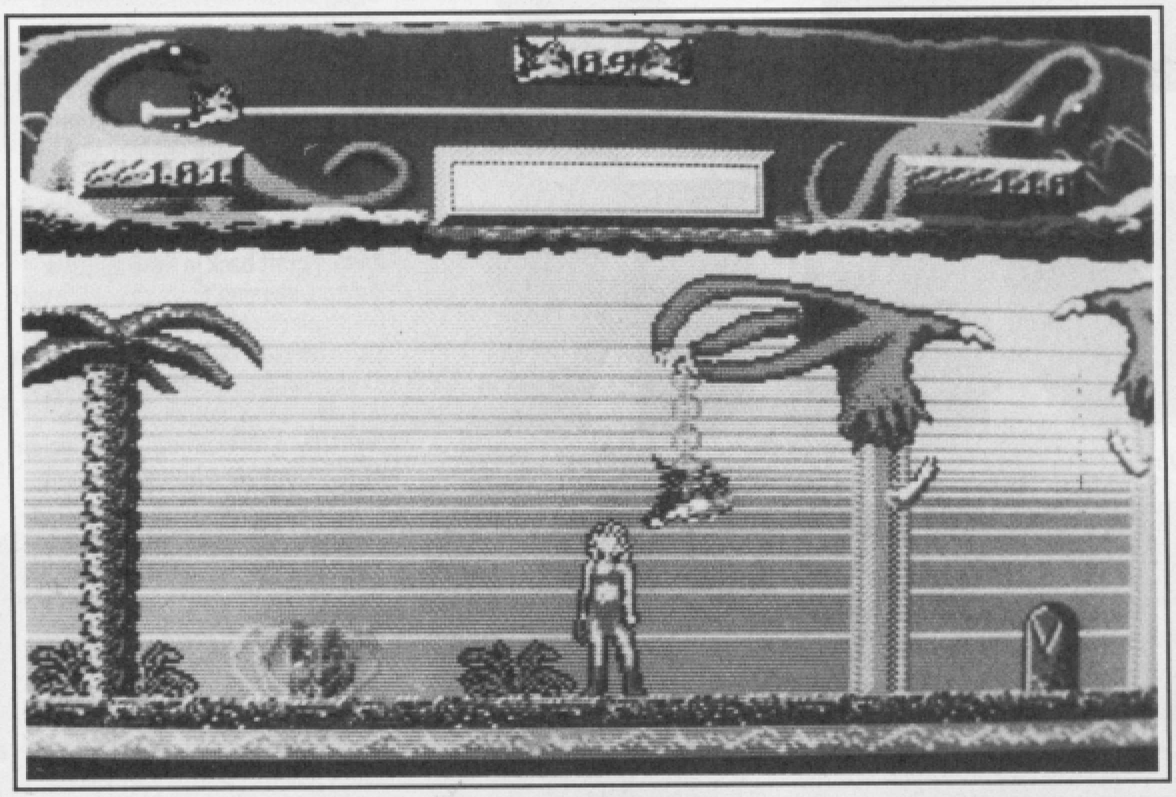
Sound too is used to great effect: many craft can be identified simply by the noise they make, which fades in and out as you move toward and away from them. Also, the sampled whale sounds used when near to the Egron's mechanical mammals is wonderfully eerie and incredibly effective.

Starglider 2 may not be the perfect game, but it's certainly an experience to be savoured at length.

Steve Jaratt

VIXEN

Martech
Price: £19.95



If you want to get ahead . . .

Behind all the exploitation of Maria Whittaker in *Barbarian* lurks a very playable game. However, Martech's *Vixen* seems to have been produced by ploughing 95% of the game budget into getting Corrine Russell to pose pathetically around a selection of plastic plants and spending the rest programming just anything to stick in the box.

Vixen the game is set on the jungle planet Granath, where the human inhabitants live in fear of the dinosaurs that dominate the land. All but one, a powerful lone female complete with synthetic whip and high-heeled shoes. Abandoned as a child and raised by a clan of magical foxes (can you believe this?), the Vixen is bestowed with magical powers, but more of that later. Vixie's quest is to penetrate the many levels of the dino's domain. Not surprisingly this is done by running in true *Thundercats/Rolling Thunder* through the jungle cracking evil monsters about the head with her magical whip.

The characters that attack Vixie are all based on a dinosaur-type

SKYCHASE

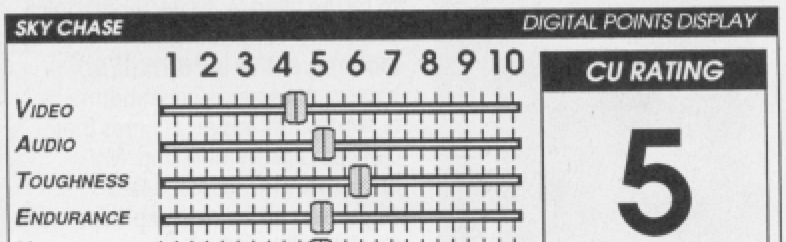


Image Works
Price: £19.99

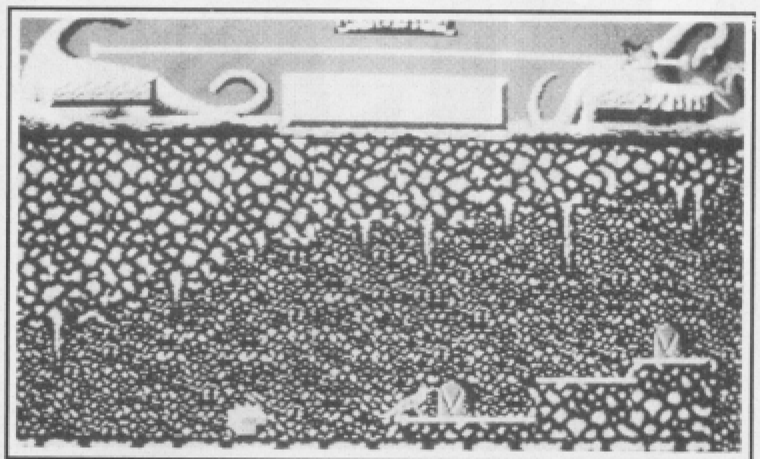
Anybody remember *Top Gun*? No, not the film, Ocean's official tie-in was released about eighteen months back on the Spectrum and Amstrad but never quite made it onto the 64. Well, although it wasn't a particularly good game, it did have one novel feature. The screen display was split vertically into two independent cockpit screens, allowing two players to participate in a 'one-on-one' aerial dogfight.

Now that idea has been revamped in *Skychase*, Mirrorsoft's first Amiga release on their new Image Works label. There's no plot, storyline or scenario to speak of, just plain and simple air combat action against another player or the computer. As I mentioned earlier, the screen display is split vertically down the middle, with each player having his own view from his plane. Each display consists of the obvious visual cockpit screen and a variety of gauges, indicating factors such as speed, altitude, ammunition and so on. In addition there's a tactical map of the playing area so you can see exactly where you are in relation to your opponent.

Combat begins with a computer controlled flyby sequence in which the two planes shoot by each other before control is handed over to the players. The game takes place over a large wireframe grid set onto the ground below, and gives an effect not dissimilar to Novagen's *Mercenary*. The two planes are also drawn using the standard vector graphics technique. The aim of the game is simple: blow your opponent out of the sky as many times as possible thus accumulating a higher score before your fuel runs out and the game ends. This is done by simply zooming around the game grid and trying to get directly up the bot of your opponent where you can open fire on him. Weaponry comes in two basic forms, cannons and missiles. Cannons are fairly basic weapons with a reasonably long range, and quite effective if your target is twisting and turning trying to evade your fire as you can just strafe it with a long burst of fire. Missiles are also quite effective, but not in as many situations. To lock a missile onto a target, get within close range and a tracking cursor will appear on screen. If you can get this in line with your own cross-hair, you can let off a missile which will hit 99% of the time, providing your opponent doesn't barrel-roll out of range at the last second.

An interesting twist to *Skychase* is the way you can effectively redesign the entire game by altering variables on the title screen until it suits you. You can choose from several types of planes, including F-14s, F-16s, Migs (the bane of my life) and even Paper planes! You can also change weapon loads for each player, as

▼ *Vix foxing around.*



theme and range from shuffling green lizards and blue crawling spiders to the big T-Rex himself. Vixie's life force doesn't come in the form of an energy bar, so any contact with a meanie will result in the loss of a life. As mentioned earlier, Vixen is protected from such attacks 'cause she's got a magical bullwhip wot she can send lashing out (*nice grasp of English, Gaz! – Ed*) disposing of any meanies in the immediate vicinity with nothing more than a quick stab of the fire button. To make things easier, the sprite collision is quite generous so a nasty has to get *very* close before it hits you, allowing you plenty of time to whip it.

Along the way, Vixie will come across quite a few different objects that will aid her on her mission, most notably balls that hang on chains from palm trees (*must be Christmas – Ed*). It doesn't sound like an invaluable mission aid at first, but if Vixen cracks her whip at it, it turns into a foxhead which can be collected. If she collects enough of these to fill a 'foxtime' bar at the top of the screen, when she completes a level by crawling into a cave at the end she mutates into a fox (wow) and enters a bonus level that's completely free of nasties (hounds, huntsmen, etc), but rife in bonus points in the shape of gems just aching to be collected by the shefox. As well as standard gems, megagems are also on offer. When Vixie collects one of these it appears at the top of the screen and is used to increase your scoring potential once you get back overground.

Apart from a few extra factors like megawhips (kill all the nasties in one shot) and the obligatory holes in the ground to be jumped, there's not a lot more to *Vixen*. Just like *Thundercats* and *Rolling Thunder* it's a simple and basic formula, but it differs from those two as it actually manages to be slightly playable. Even though for the most part, the graphics are quite basic and the scrolling just a bit jerky, the Vixen herself has supposdly been digitised and as such the animation as she runs and crawls is really quite effective. This is complemented by an enjoyable jungle soundtrack complete with sampled bongos to produce quite an enjoyable atmosphere. The gameplay however, sometimes tends to be frustrating as jumping over holes in the ground is not the easiest thing in the world to do, due to the sluggish stick control.

Rolling Thunder, Vixen and *and Thundercats* all offer the same kind of thing. *Vixen* deserves to be your last choice because of its stupid sexism.

Gary Whitta

VIXEN — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	5
Audio	5
Toughness	4
Endurance	4
VFM	3

CU RATING

4

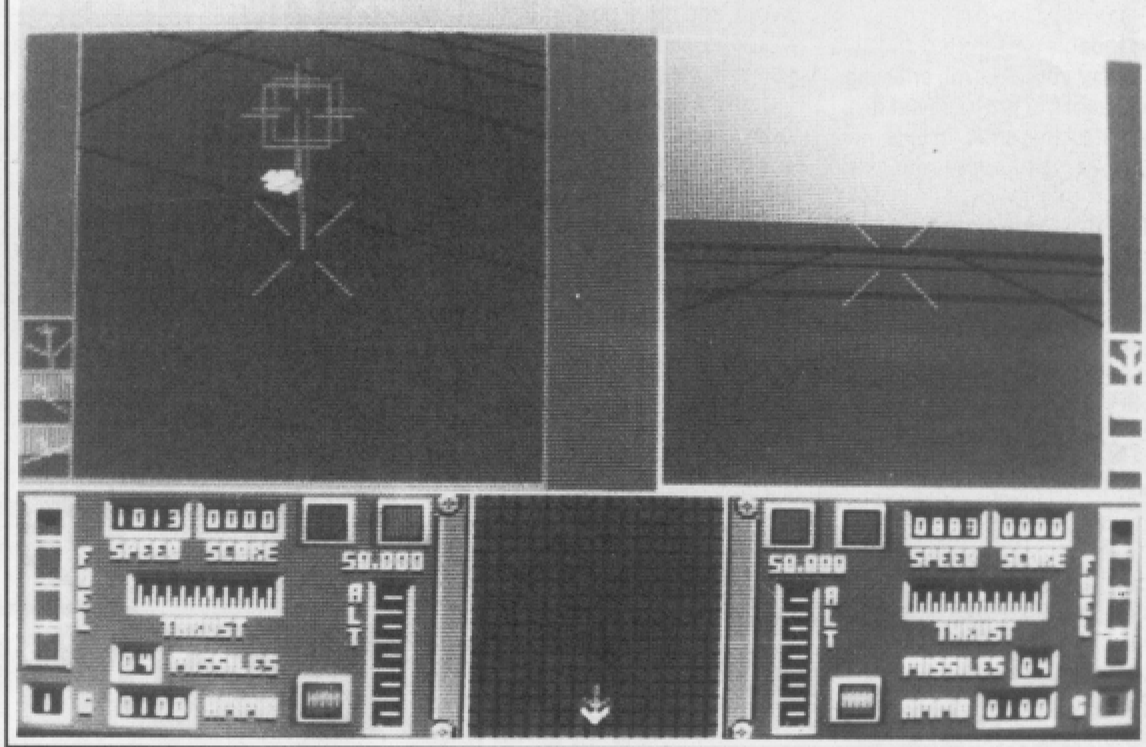
well as missile lock ranges and cannon impact tolerance (but only well 'ard *Interceptor* vets like me should muck around with these settings). The amount of fuel, and subsequently the length of the game can also be changed.

Game-designing frills aside, *Skychase* is a pretty mundane attempt at an arcade flight sim. Graphically the game is enough to turn you into a manic depressive, as there's nothing on the screen except the sky (the blue bit), the ground (the green bit) and the grid, which is only there to point out that you are actually moving. Very rarely do you get close enough to your opponent to pick out any detail on his plane. Sound too is dreary (dull engine sounds and boring title page music do not bring me to the height of aural excitement). What annoys me most about *Skychase* is the way that the computer behaves so realistically. Unlike a *real* flight game like *Interceptor* where enemy Migs pitch and roll with the greatest expertise to avoid your attacks, the computer plane in *Skychase* is quite happy to let you blow him away with practically no evasive maneouvres.

However, that's a nitpick at the 1 player option. It's the two player game where all the enjoyment is to be gleaned, as here at least you're up against a competent opponent (unless you're playing Tony Dillon).

For this reason, I would only advise you to consider buying *Skychase* if you have a chum to play it with. The computer mode is boring, too easy and ultimately a drag to play.

Gary Whitta

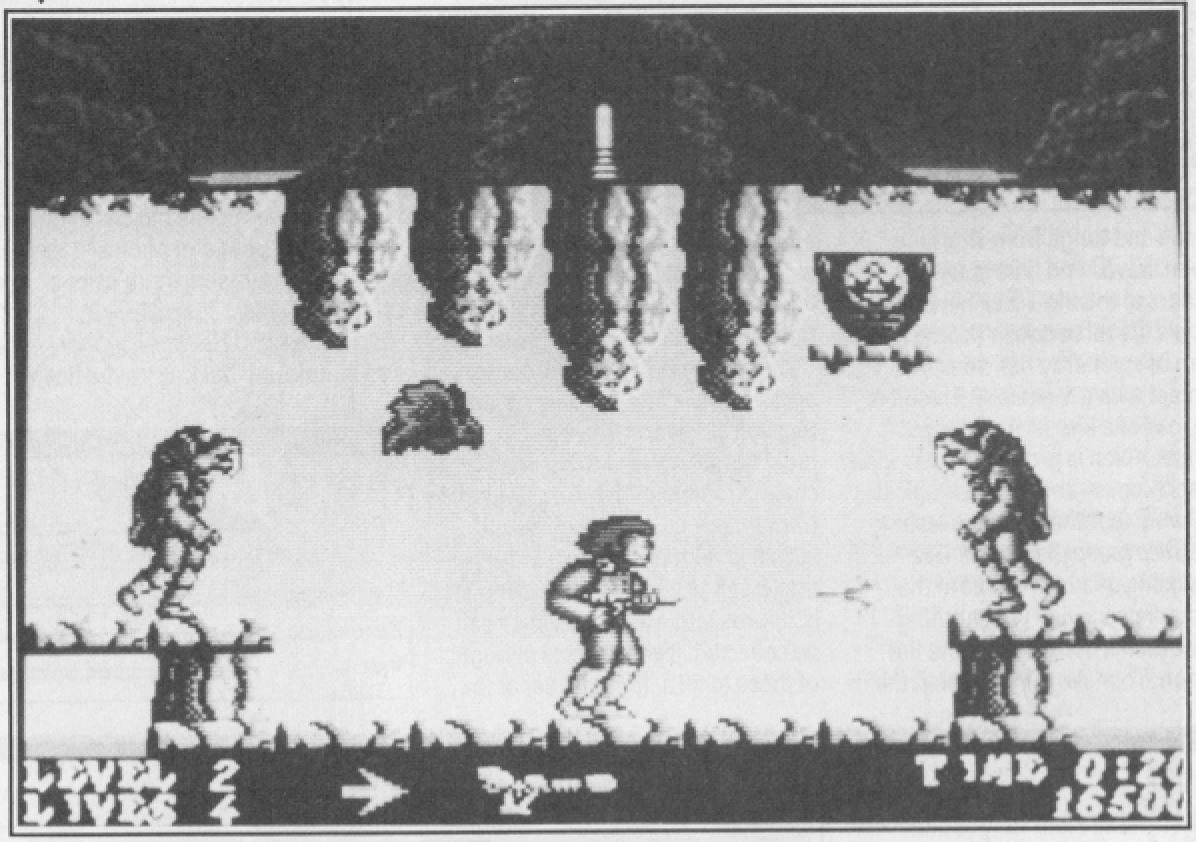


▲ ***Grid your loins for battle.***

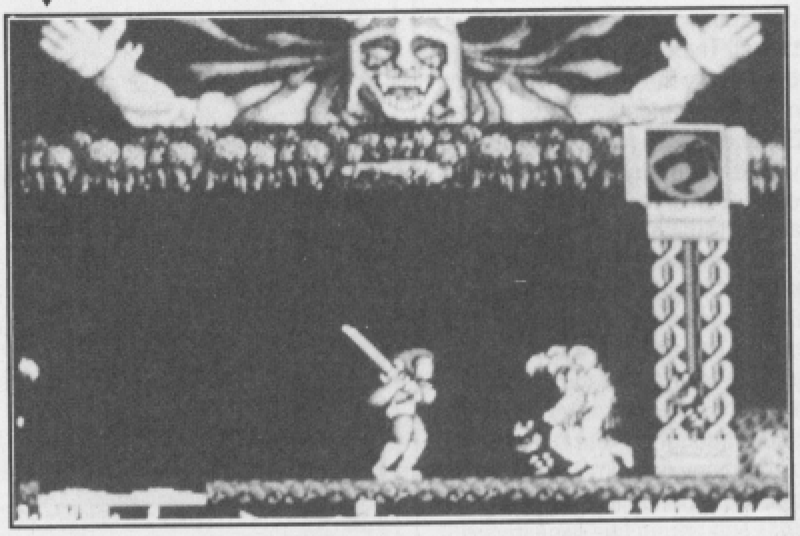
THUNDERCATS

Elite
Price: £24.95

Lion-O gives it some stick.



Mumm-ra appears as you run low on time.



To be honest, I wasn't overly thrilled when I first heard that Elite had signed up the kiddie's cartoon *Thundercats* for conversion, primarily because there's not a lot you can do with a cartoon concerning 5 cat-like mutants and their battle against an Egyptian mummy. All my suspicions were confirmed with the 8-bit versions were released back in '87. It was indeed quite a drab and boring game.

Before I start moaning, which I inevitably will, I'll give you a brief rundown of the plot. Lion-o, Lord of the Thundercats was happily residing on Third Earth, an alien planet, along with his feline buddies, when Mumm-ra, a pretty nasty chap with big muscles covered in bandages, came along and nicked the all-powerful Eye of Thundera, the source of the Thundercat's power (yaawn). Lion-o is understandably a bit miffed and sets about, under your control, entering the domain of Mumm-ra to get it back. What all this adds up to is basically *Rolling Thunder* with cats. Not very promising.

Lion-o Runs from left to right across a series of changing backgrounds on his quest for the Eye of Thundera, and is provided with a sword with which to deal with the blood-hungry minions that Mumm-ra sends out to thwart your progress. A quick stab of the fire button will send an enemy to meet its maker by dissolving it in stunning Amiga-vision.

As you make your way across the landscape, you'll come across water-filled abysses that must be jumped over to progress. Mis-time your jump and porr 'ol Lion-o takes an early bath, and as cats hate water so much, he loses a life in the process. Lion-o can also lose a life by running into an enemy. The enemies are pretty fiendish, and vary from catmen, both large and small, and, on later levels, falcons and armoured wolfmen, who patrol the rocky platforms suspended above the water (particularly on level 2). Extra lives are available by hitting pots held in the air with your sword, and more powerful weapons, such as a laser gun are also available in this way.

Unlike a lot of Amiga software today, *Thundercats* makes no effort to *look* like an Amiga game. It's very similar to the ST version, which was no great shakes anyway. Although the sprites are reasonably well defined, the backdrops are bland, and animation surprisingly poor. The music is nothing to shout about (unless you want to shout "Turn that bloody awful music off!") and is accompanied by rather lacklustre in-game FX. The actual game itself is of a very poor quality, consisting of little more than 'run-bash-run-bash' monotony. There may be an initial attraction to get through the first couple of levels, but after that, the consistently uninteresting gameplay will soon have you reaching for the power switch.

Elite have released a couple of right corkers on the Amiga in the shape of *Buggy Boy* and *Ikari Warriors*, and both *Paperboy* and *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* look set to be equally impressive. With such a long string of releases in such a short time, there had to be a duff one in there somewhere. And here it is.

Gary Whitta

AMIGA

THUNDERCATS — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	5
Audio	3
Toughness	7
Endurance	5
VFM	5

CU RATING

5



▲ A fleet of missiles heads your way on Gorbaxa.

STAR RAY



▼ Ever had the feeling someone's watching you?



Logotron
Price: £24.95

If I was to tell you that the first *Defender* clone had appeared on the Amiga some of you might groan. But think back to the early days of the 64. Two of the best shoot 'em ups ever have to be *Guardian* and *Dropzone*, both homages to the coin-op classic. *StarRay* is as good as either given that it runs on a far superior machine.

The plot is complicated but the gameplay, as you'd expect, is straightforward, uncomplicated blasting. You control a nifty little star fighter through a number of different assignments which take you from one planet to another in your star system. The purpose of each mission is simply to clear three waves of unpleasantness which clutter up each particular level.

Each planet is effectively a new, pretty backdrop. For example Level 1, or Gorbaxa is a lunar-type



landscape, Sirion is a dense jungle which is growing at an incredible rate and has to be kept in check by sort of timberbots. Level 3 is Sharlon, replete with arctic scenery and a fragile ozone layer.

The nasties that populate the various planets are equally as pretty as the backdrops. The jungle has dancing flies and quavering bees, whilst the arctic conditions of Sharlon are populated by unpleasant whirling hexagons and aerial stations, which if hit will spin wildly on their axis disturbing your crucial radar screen.

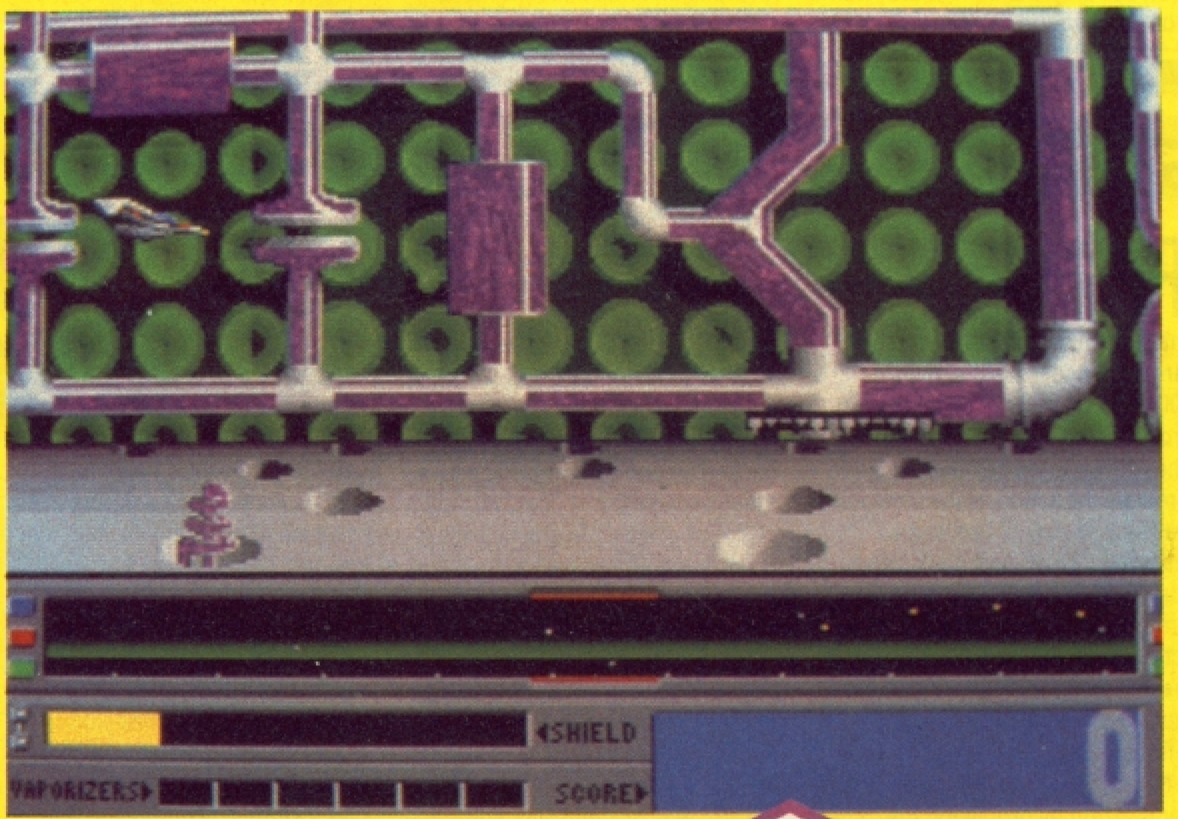
Naturally you're not expected to wade through the lot without a bit of extra weaponry. This comes in the form of italicised letters left behind when you take out the alien landers, metal eggs which are slow but have an unpleasant habit of landing on your ground installations and cacking on them until they're useless. A nasty fizzing accompanies the hideous process.

Extra shield power (essential) can be found by shooting air buses which come along carrying shield and bonus pods. These look the same on the radar though they behave somewhat less erratically than the Blue Hunters which ram you and drain a large chunk of your shield power. Save your vapourisers (smart bombs) for them, accessed by a rather fiddly dive for the right mouse button.

Although control of your ship isn't truly inertial *StarRay* feels very nice to play. Its scrolling is as smooth as a baby's bum and the action unrelenting. Sound and graphics are consistently entertaining.

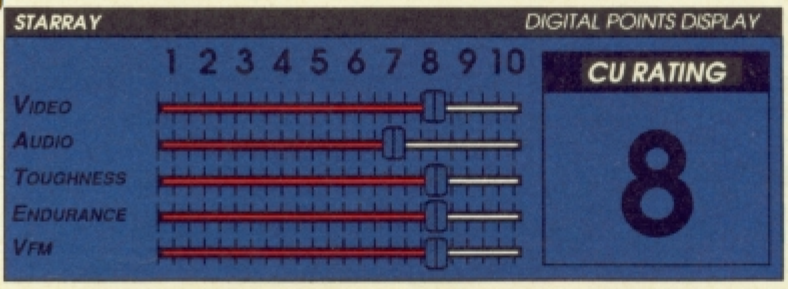
This all goes to make *StarRay* one of the few good blasts available on the Amiga after nearly two years. A sad state of affairs, and one in desperate need of resolution. This is definitely a start. **Mike Pattenden**

The radar shuts down in the fjords of Sharlon.

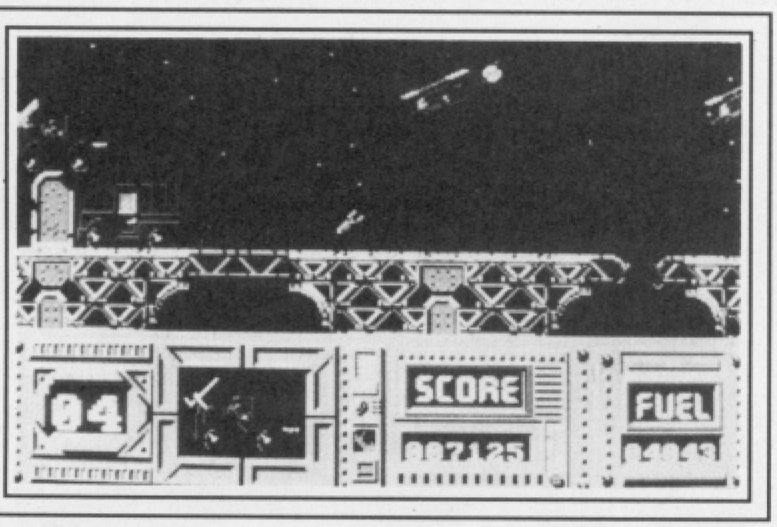


CU SCREEN STAR

AMIGA



ARMY



Whistling up some trouble.

Imagine
Price: £14.95

After having played *Army Moves* for some considerable time today, I've come to the conclusion that it isn't a very enjoyable game to play. In fact it's about as much fun as standing next to a fat, sweaty man in a crowded tube train on the way home from Farringdon.

The game's fantastically vague scenario has you as an elite soldier whose mission is to... well, cause as much damage to the enemy's secret fortress as possible. The game has three sections. Stage one has you in a bouncy little jeep that has to get from one side of an iron bridge to another. The commander of the enemy forces is a bit miffed about you riding your jeep all over his lovely clean bridge and promptly sends out a fleet of armoured trucks and helicopters to blow you away.

Being a shrewd young soldier, you remembered to pack a missile launcher into the back of your jeep before you set out and so a quick jab on the fire button will send a volley of three missiles zooming from your jeep. Your jeep, thanks to its ultra bouncing tyres and mysterious disappearing wheelarches, has the nifty ability to bounce into the air, thus avoiding the missiles that the choppers lob at you. The bounce also comes in useful when traversing parts of the bridge that have been shot away.

Should you manage to complete this first section you can proceed to the second where you park your jeep and leap into a helicopter, which now has to fly from right to left. Again you have two types of weaponry, the standard front facing missiles and bomb-things that you can drop on hostile missile installations that fire their own brand of death back at you. The installations aren't too accurate in their firing though, and the real threat comes from enemy planes. This is probably the most difficult game section of the lot and is so mind-meltingly tough that you're more likely to end up in an asylum of some sort or another than in the final section of the game...

After leaving your chopper, you have to complete the last section on foot which means jumping over quicksand, dodging grenades, running through swamps and into the not-so-humble abode of El Presidente himself. This is all pretty run of the mill hopscotch stuff. Mutant birds flap down on you and rip your eyes out with their beaks. Firing your gun will only frighten them away.

Army Moves is not a great deal of

AMIGA

SPACE

Loriciels
Price: £19.99

Remember that bit in *Return of the Jedi* where Luke and Leia jump onto speeder bikes and chase the Imperial biker scouts through Endor Forest at over 200mph? Of course you do, it was probably the best part of the film. The Atari coin-op however failed to simulate the action as the viewpoint was all wrong (you had to look diagonally down on the bike making control awkward). A step closer to simulating that kind of high-speed action was Cascade's *Sky Runner* for the 64. It put the player right behind the speeder and made the game infinitely more enjoyable to play.

Now Loriciels have jumped on the bandwagon by producing the feebly-named *Space Racer*. Anybody at Loriciels who says that they weren't influenced by the scene in *Jedi* when producing this game tells a porky, methinks. The player takes control of a floating jetbike with which to race over a trio of futuristic racecourses. Rather than an entire road to race over, you are given only a thin segmented strip on the landscape to indicate where you should be going. Just to make sure you don't stray of the beaten track, the track is fenced off on either side by a series of roadside obstacles such as signposts, telegraph poles and so on.

Before the race the rider is shown standing beside his bike. "Hello!" he exclaims in the campest voice available and mounts his bike which coughs and splutters into life. He then rides up to the starting line, flanked by two computer racers and the race begins.

The controls are weird to say the least. Forward and back will adjust the bike's altitude, while left and right is used to steer. The weird bit comes in when you hear that the fire button is used to accelerate, and so firing your laser means you have to hit the space bar which is the most inconvenient thing ever. Mike P found a way of contorting himself so he could control the bike reasonably well while hitting space with his elbow, but it didn't work for me. I have to take a hand off the joystick, resulting in loss of control, usually round a hairpin bend.

Should you collide with one of the roadside obstacles, one of two things will happen: if you just clip the obstacle, you'll lose control of the bike momentarily while it spins and rolls before correcting itself. If you hit the obstacle head on, the bike explodes and loses you valuable time. Not that time is an important factor. The only thing that'll cause the game to end is running out of fuel, just like *Roadblasters.* Fuel is scarce and represented by a series of lights in the status section which slowly go out as you progress. There are two ways of expending fuel. The obvious one is simply by riding,and the second is by firing on opponent's bikes. The reason for this is that the energy bolts you fire are taken directly from the bike's fuel store. Each shot uses up one unit of fuel. It may not sound like much, but riding slaughters the fuel on its own, and considering it's very difficult to shoot down another bike, you can lose a hell of a lot of fuel in a very short time.

Fuel can however be replaced by running over blue sphere-like objects in the road. Unfortunately, they hardly ever appear, and when one does, it's normally on a bend so you'll have to steer real hard to catch it.

Space Racer is an enjoyable game to play. Although initially it seems far too easy to crash, you'll soon learn to moderate your speed and take corners safely. In terms of graphics, it could have been better. The bikers are quite well defined but the road doesn't scroll quite as well as it could, and it isn't very fast.

A quick look at *Super Hang-on* on the ST will show just what a 16-bit machine can do with a race game. The so-so graphics are made up for by the sound, which comprises a reasonable soundtrack, excellent engine revving effects and the camp "Hello!" at the start of each game. I do have doubts about the game's lastability however. The gameplay is very samey after a while and that's why I can't recommend it.

Gary Whitta

AMIGA

[ARM]Y MOVES

ARMY MOVES — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

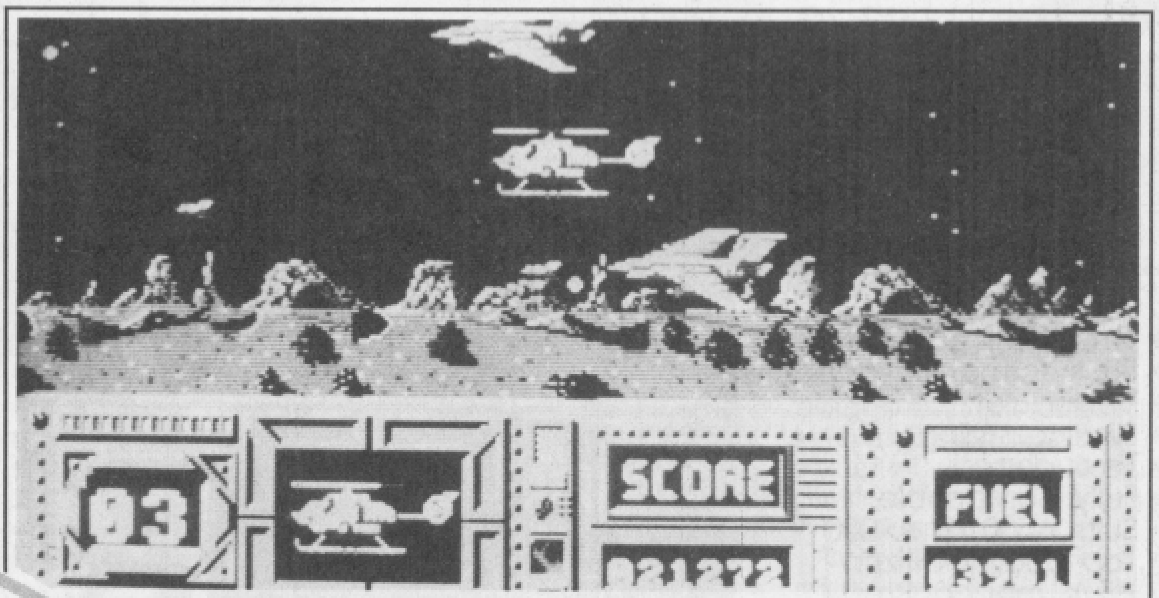
VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

4

fun. The three sections are all pretty poor both aesthetically and in terms of gameplay. Each one is tougher than the last, which is really saying something considering that section one is more difficult than the end sections of many other games. The whole feel of all three sections is wrong and totally fails to convey any sense of action or excitement. The game's single saving trace is the refreshingly camp attitude. A laughably bad (but fun) rendition of 'Colonel Bogie' plays throughout the entire proceedings and there are a couple of nice presentation touches such as the way that the title of the game is spelt out in animated pockmarks left by bulletholes and the hi-score table lists the top 'Prime Movers' (must have been done by a Zodiac Mindwarp fan). This, however does little to compensate for what is ultimately a terminally boring game. **Gary Whitta**

Look out! Colonel Bogie's all over me!



AMIGA

[SPAC]E RACER

SPACE RACER — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

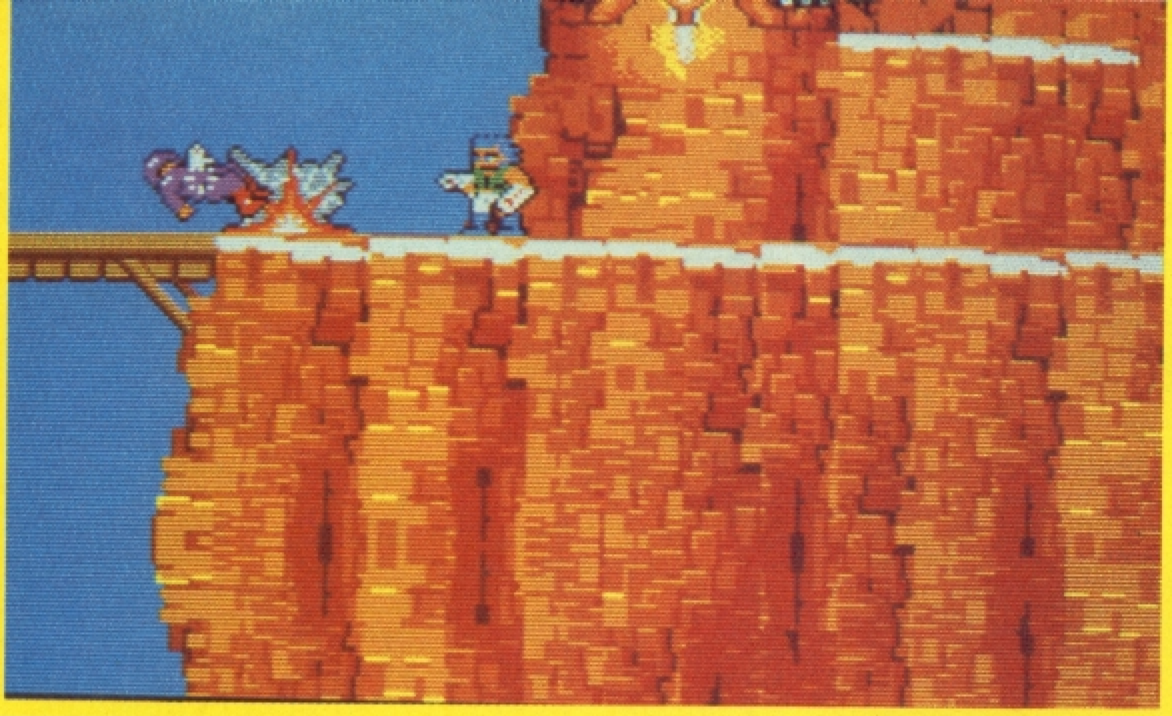
VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

5

Right son, you're nicked for driving through a radioactive wasteland with no lights!





BIONIC COMMANDO

U.S. Gold /Capcom
Price: £24.99

AMIGA

BIONIC COMMANDO	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY
Video	
Audio	
Toughness	
Endurance	
VFM	

CU RATING: 7

Paratroopers? Ha, nothing but a bunch of wimps! Marines? Couldn't even eat a whole bowl of Shreddies in one go! No, if you want to know who the hardest, meanest, roughest, toughest bunch of soldiers in the galaxy are, you need look no further than *Bionic Commando*, the latest Capcom coin-op conversion courtesy of U.S. Gold.

The world is under threat by aliens so it's time to call up the BCs. What sets these bionic chappies apart from regular soldiers is the fact that they've all got a rather nifty metallic arm that's useful for all kinds of things.

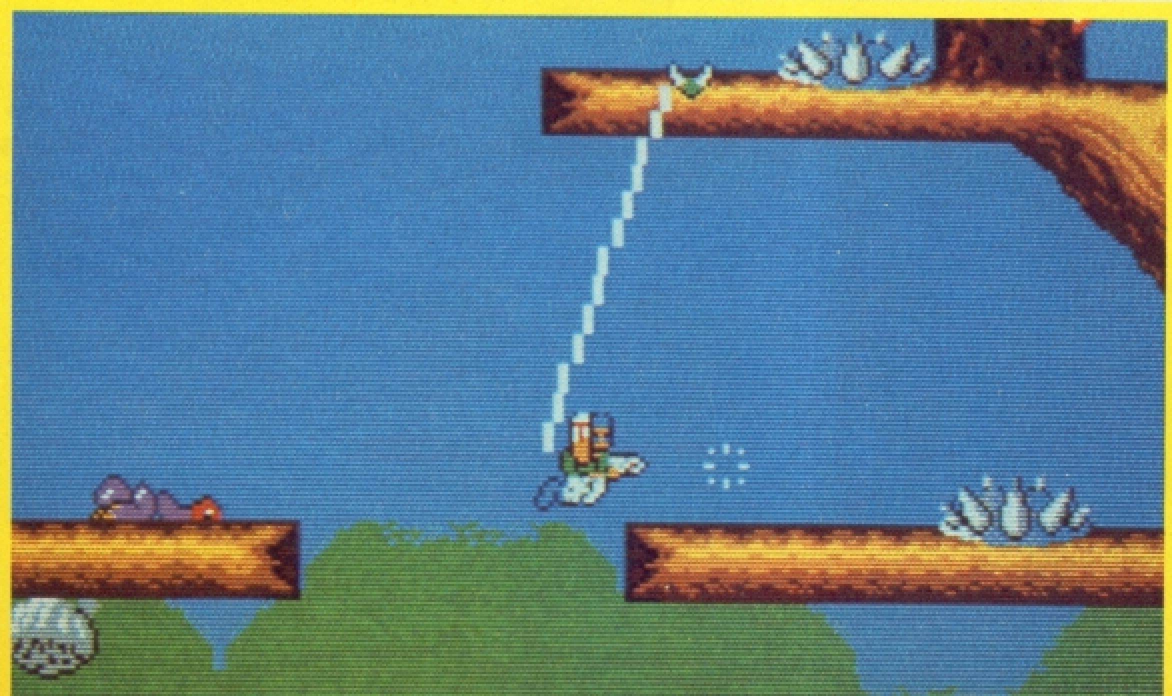
The alien stronghold that you must penetrate is split into five levels. The forest is the first, and so it's here that you parachute into at the outset of the game. The ground may be tempting just to run around on at first, but before long you'll want to get up on to all those tempting tree branches above you, so hit the fire button and point the stick up and lo and behold, your bionic arm springs out and grabs the above branch. Pull up and the arm will now retract, pulling you on to the branch. You can also get over gaps by throwing your arm out at a diagonal and swinging across in true Tarzan fashion.

As you'd expect, each level is patrolled by hordes of marauding nasties who'd like nothing more than to destroy you. The standard enemy troops are pretty small, dress in stylish purple uniforms, and have a tendency to shoot and lob grenades at you. To get rid of these troublesome enemies, you can either shoot them with your bionic cannon or opt for the much more entertaining method of kneeling down and sending out your bionic arm to knock them off their feet. More deadly enemies come in the form of larger, more musclebound soldiers who require several shots to kill, and birds, which fly at you as you get further into each level. As if a thirty foot bionic arm wasn't enough to destroy the nasties with, extra weapons parachute in from time to time and can be collected to provide more devastating firepower, and higher speed.

Although the first level is relatively simple to negotiate, the others can be a real bitch to complete. Later levels see the arrival of divebombing helicopters, disappearing platforms, and robot-like stompers. Seeing as you are only given about three minutes to complete each level (not a lot) and only five commandos to do them with, it all adds up to a tough game to crack.

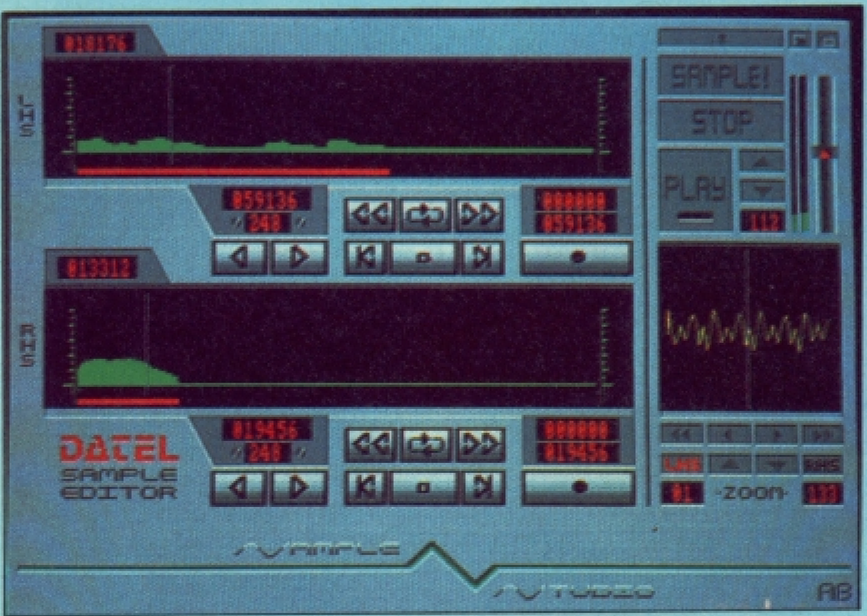
It has to be said that *Bionic Commando* has been translated really quite well from the coin-op. The graphics are close, but not that impressive in their own right (the coin-op wasn't too impressive in the first place). The scrolling seems to have been a bit of a botched job. Rather than continuous scrolling, keeping the main sprite in the centre, it works on 'walk a bit-scroll-walk a bit-scroll' technique that can at times be quite infuriating. In direct contrast to the average graphics, the sound has to be some of the best I've heard on the Amiga so far. There are no FX, but each level has its own tune, and level one particularly has a wonderfully jolly bit of salsa featuring some excellent instrument samples. In terms of gameplay *BC* isn't the most rewarding game I've played, but it's still enjoyable enough to hold your interest for a good while to come, as 'just one more go' addictiveness is certainly in evidence.

Gary Whitta



A perfectly armless game.

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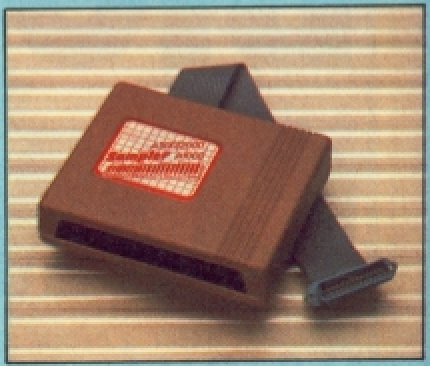
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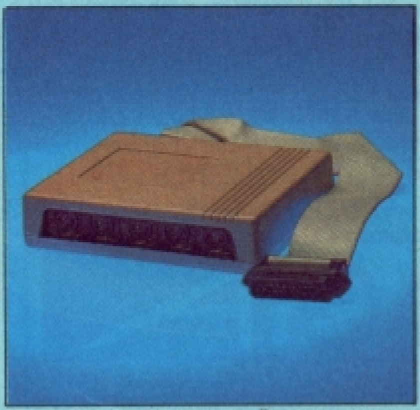
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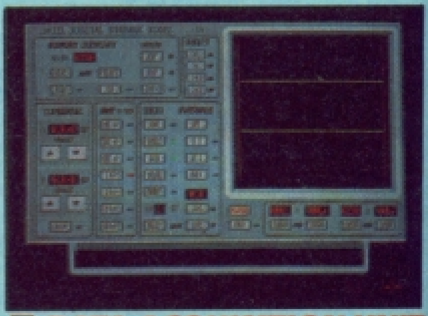
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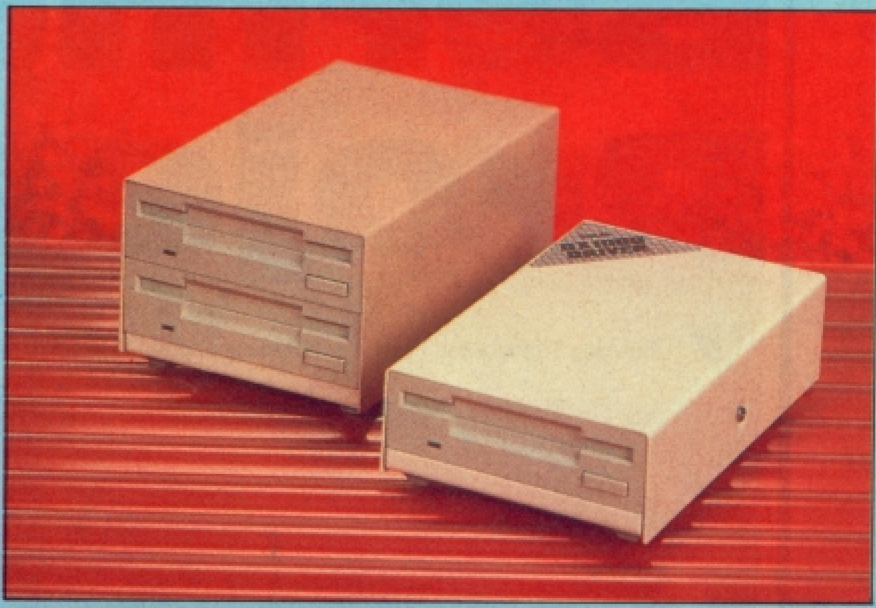
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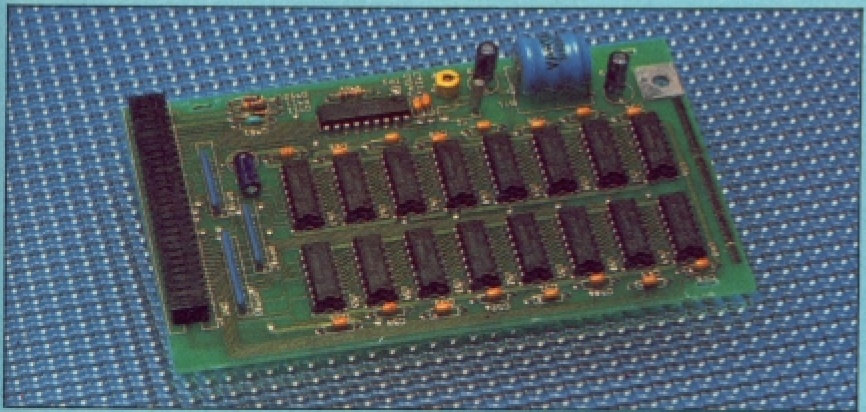
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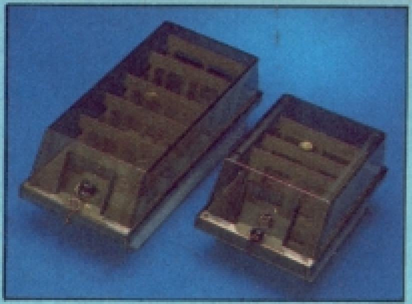


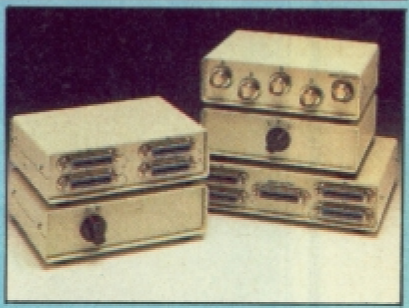


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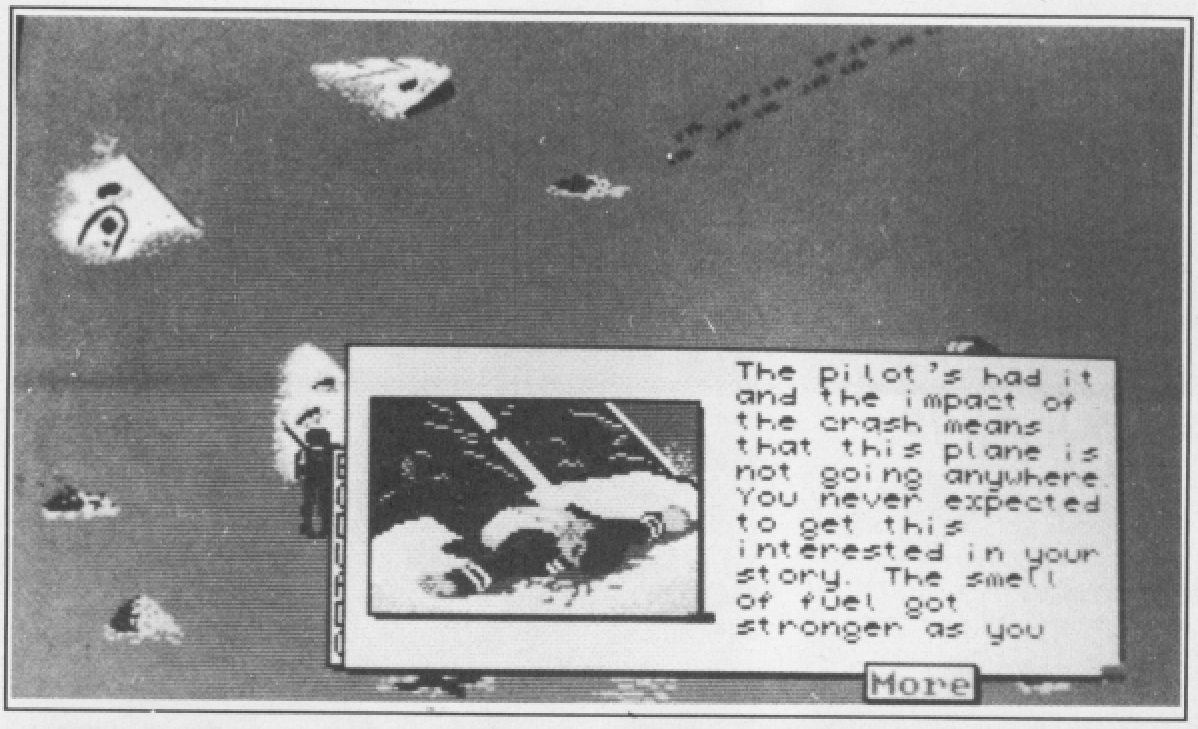
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Bermuda Project

Amiga
Mirrorsoft
Price: £24.99

Bermuda Triangle can't you see it from my angle . . . (© Barry Manilow)



The Bermuda Triangle is a place that is shrouded in mystery. For many years there have been incidents of aeroplanes and boats suddenly disappearing from the area that stretches from Bermuda to the Virgin Islands and Florida.

The *Bermuda Project* begins with an OTT opening sequence in which a large cargo plane is shown flying over the Bermuda Triangle. As it does so, it is struck by a freak bolt of lightning and the plane makes a crash landing on an island slap-bang in the middle. This is where the game begins. As the only survivor of the crash, you awaken after a spell of unconsciousness to find the plane unsurprisingly wrecked, the pilot dead in his chair, and parts of the plane's carcass beginning to burn.

Obviously what you want to do is get off this island, so you set about finding a means to do so. The game is presented in a very similar way to Microillusion's *Faery Tale Adventure*. Your character, the guy with the rucksack, stays pretty much in the centre of the screen while the scenery scrolls around him. The first thing you'll want to do before you

Street Fighter

Amiga
US Gold/ Capcom
Price: £24.95

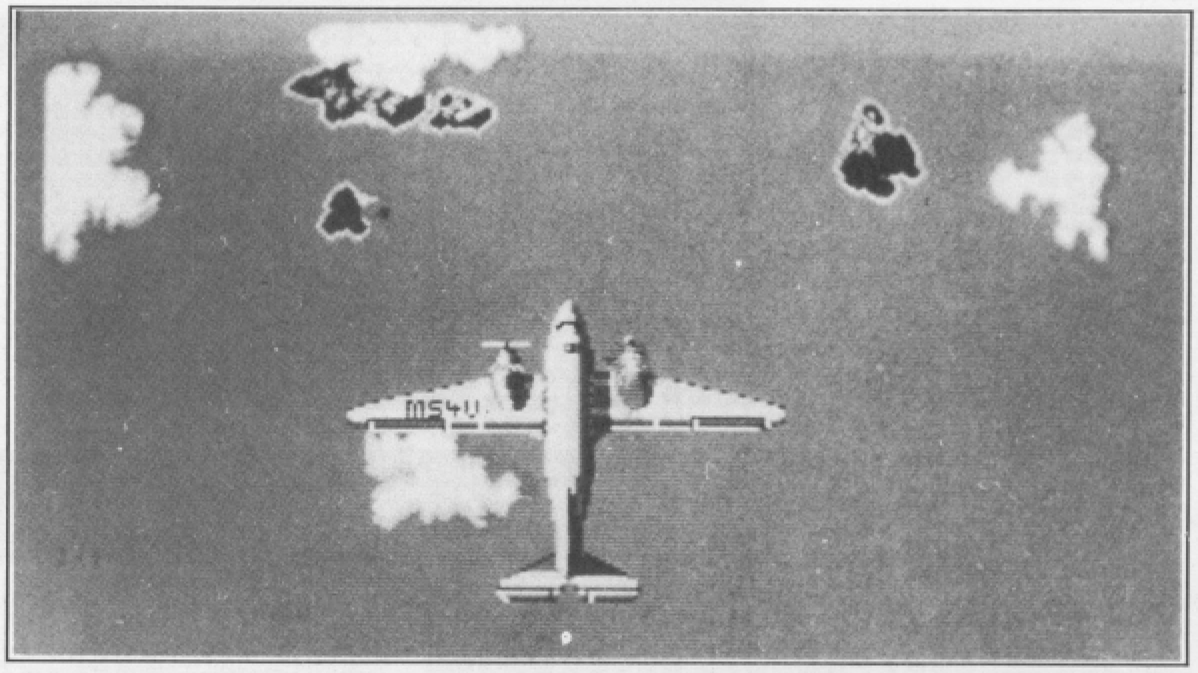
The shop sign says it all.



Although Capcom's *Street Fighter* wasn't nearly as successful as some of its arcade rivals, it was at least as enjoyable to play, due to the interesting feature of 'pressure pads' on the console which measured how hard you punched it with your fist, causing an attack to be launched on your on-screen opponent with equal ferocity. With graphics and sound to match the excellence of the gameplay, it's not surprising that *Street Fighter* was one of the first games US Gold started working on when they signed up every Capcom game for the next aeon.

In case you haven't seen the coin-op, or missed the CU review in July (where were you?) I'll give you a brief game explanation: You play Ryu, an aspiring young street fighter who wants to become king of the bullyboys, so he hops on a plane and travels to far and distant lands to battle it out with the 'ardest men in the world. The countries you can visit include the US, China, Japan and the UK.

Another piece of software shot down in flames.



go off searching the island is to search the wreckage of the plane, and this is done by using a set of *Spellbound* type window menus. Options such as Get, Drop, Examine, Attach and Detach are all available from here.

Close inspection of the plane will reveal a radio, which you can take and then proceed to explore the island, which is when you first begin to realise how dull this game really is. The island itself is not particularly large, and very drab in detail, so you'll find yourself wandering around aimlessly from one coast to another. The only two things of any interest I found were a set of foot prints leading away from the plane and then suddenly stopping, and a large wooden-walled complex, supposedly inhabited by natives. It seemed as if the rest of the game would unfold once I entered, but try as I might, I found it impossible to get past the gates.

Later on in the game there's a jeep to be found, but even that has no petrol in it so you'll have to go off searching for some as well. Personally I couldn't be bothered, mainly because it is so fantastically boring, there's simply no compulsion to solve the puzzles. The entire game is played in complete silence, apart from an irritating *whoosh* when you get near to the coast. Graphically it's also pretty poor. The main sprite is quite nice, but the scrolling is slow and jerky and the backdrops are sadly lacking in detail. The mouse control is also very frustrating indeed. Controlling your hero is a tiresome process, as is using the menu system. All these faults add up to a very unprofessional attempt at a game that only die-hard arcade adventure fans should consider looking at.

Gary Whitta

AMIGA

BERMUDA PROJECT — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	5
Audio	3
Toughness	8
Endurance	3
VFM	4

CU RATING

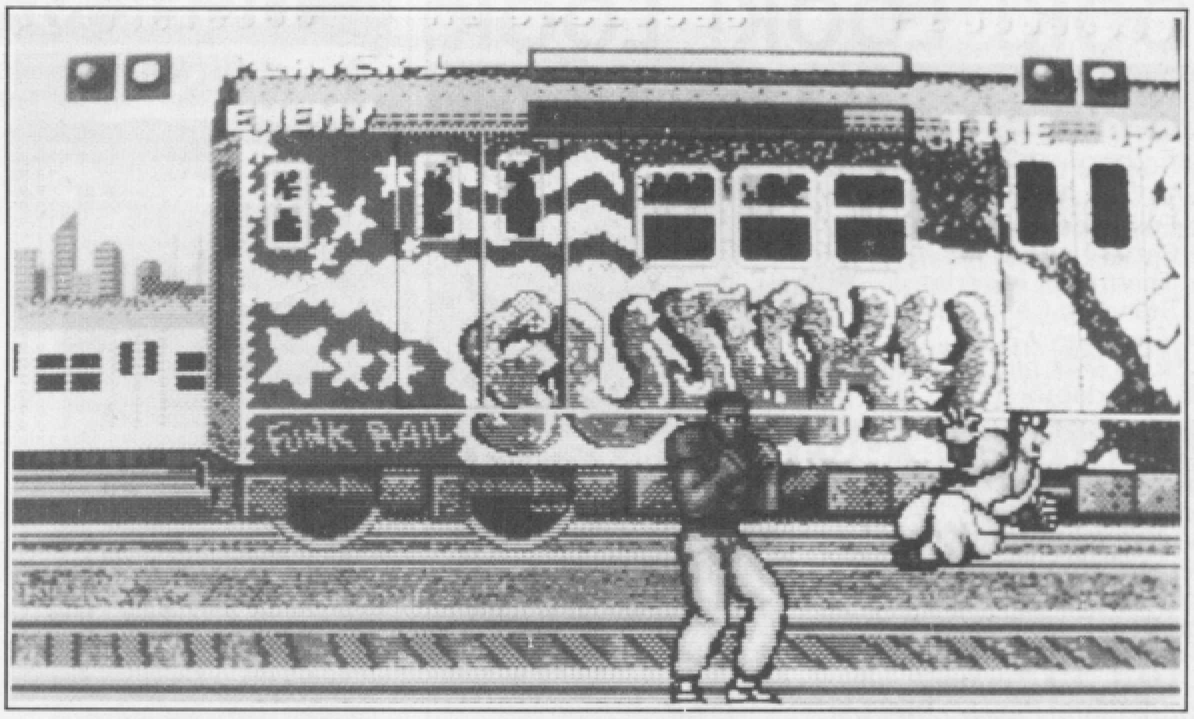
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Each country has it's own distinctive backdrop, for example Japan has a pagoda setting, and each has its own pair of enemies. If you choose to travel to China, you'll come up against Lee and Gen; Retsu and Geki the ninja can be found in Japan. Eagle and Birdie hang out in England and Joe and Mike can be found in the States.

The game is in a very similar vein to the ageing *Yie Ar Kung Fu*. Control of your fighter is a pretty standard affair, employing the well-worn 'one direction for one technique' method. Each opponent will have his own fighting style, for instance Geki the Ninja has a habit of disappearing in a mystic whirlwind and then reappearing somewhere totally different.

Although *Street Fighter*'s instructions boast all kinds of flashy moves, most of them are difficult and frustrating to execute. Only the standard straight punch and kick were easy to execute. To make things worse, it's possible to beat all your opponents by using just these two moves repeatedly: just keep bashing away and eventually your enemy will collapse. In fact the whole thing is rather suspect where sprite collision is concerned.

Don't be fooled by the attractive screenshots on this page either, they may look nice while they're still but as soon as they start moving it's



Jerk City, so much so that the whole program becomes very tiresome to play, and any initial interest will soon wane. Maybe the reason for the sloppy execution of *Street Fighter* is that it was programmed by Tiertex, formerly known for converting *Rolling Thunder* to the Amiga, and writing the below average UK version of *Street Fighter* on the 64. Looks like they just can't cut it.

Gary Whitta

AMIGA

STREET FIGHTER — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	6
Audio	6
Toughness	4
Endurance	5
VFM	4

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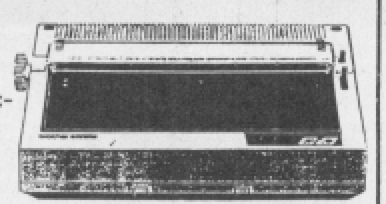
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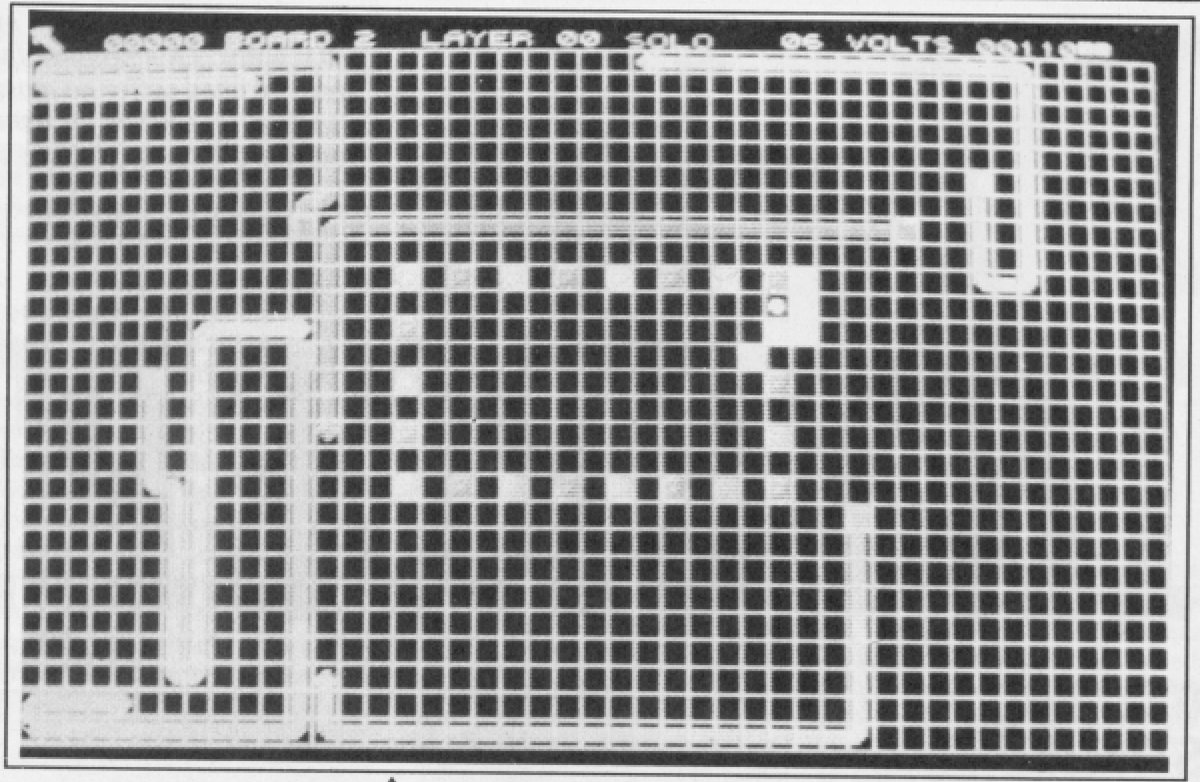
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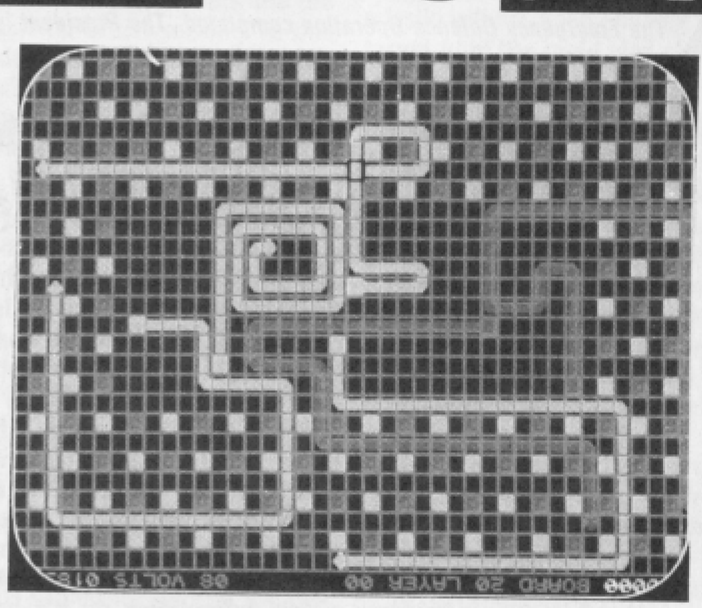
I can't say I was overly keen when I first saw the packaging for *Tracers*: neither the decidedly dull screenshots on the back nor the lengthy waffling scenario booklet inside — a total rip-off of the plot of that ace sci-fi flick of a few years back, 'Tron', incidentally — held out much hope of fun.

I was wrong. True, *Tracers* makes absolutely no use whatsoever of the Amiga's graphic capabilities, but behind this pathetically un-state-of-the-art exterior lies a fiendishly addictive game.

Though the attached booklet runs to a dozen pages, the actual gameplay is simple to grasp. Think of that old arcade game *Snakes* (included on Firebird's budget *Arcade Classics* package). Or, better still, think of the amazing high-speed chase scene inside the computer circuitry landscape of the aforementioned 'Tron'.

You start each level as a flashing square. There will be at least one other flashing square on the playing area, which is simply a huge grid of squares. As soon as play begins all the players, whether under human or computer control, start moving, fairly nippily I might add, leaving a trail behind them. Actually the trail left is really more of a wall: neither the player himself, nor any of the other 'tracers' can cross this trail — contact with it leads to destruction. There's no provision for lengthy planning either — your 'tracer' hasn't got any brakes, so all you can do is control the direction in which it moves. The idea is to box all the other oppenents in, forcing them eventually to crash into a trail, while preventing the same thing happening to yourself. And even when you've caused your last opponent to self-destruct, you mustn't take your mind off what you're doing — the level doesn't end until all the opposing tracers' trails have disappeared, which they do square by square backwards from where they met their sticky end.

Apart from your own and your opponents' trails, there are plenty of other things which will kill you if you hit 'em: all the boundry walls (skillful turning when you reach the edge of the playing area is essential), plus various solid bricks which lie dotted about the playing area. But there are also fuel nodes (only take the ones in your own colour, your opponents' ones are lethal to you), extra life tokens and smart bomb squares which kill all the other tracers on the level. There is also one extremely useful feature which allows you to escape from seemingly desperate situations: each tracer has a square pulsing up and down its trail at high speed. Occasionally this pulse square stops for a few moments on a particular trail square, and this forms a temporary "doorway" through the trail.



▲ *Through the doorway.*

You get points for travelling more than twenty squares, for picking up fuel nodes and extra life tokens, for completing each level and for crossing your own trail via one of the temporary doorways. There are five different play modes, for one or two players, allowing you to play by yourself, with or against a mate and/or computer-controlled tracers.

Your tracer moves in whichever direction you last tweaked your joystick, and there's an acceleration button (useful when you're trying to reach a border before an opponent in order to box him in.)

I have got a couple of quibbles with *Tracers*. The graphics aren't that special, and, more seriously, some of the colours are very close, which occasionally causes you to hit a deadly obstacle rather than a fuel node. And, frankly, twenty-five quid for a game this simple does seem a bit steep.

But, when all is said and done, the joy obtained boxing Mike P in five times in a row was better than anything I've experienced on the Amiga for yonks.

Nick Kelly

TRACERS	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	
Audio	
Toughness	
Endurance	
VFM	

CU RATING

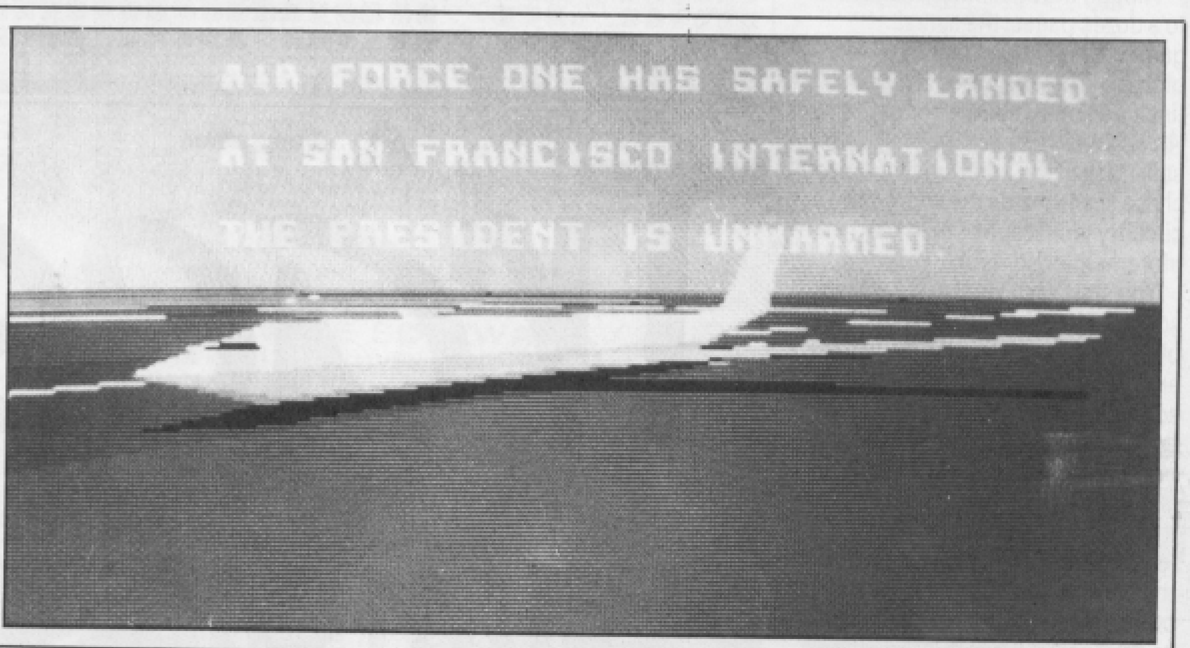
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F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR

If you've been suffering at the hands of rogue Migs in Interceptor, EA's brilliant (and exceptionally tough) combat sim, you need suffer no more, as Gary Whitta, CU's very own Top Gun (ahem!) is on hand with tips that just might save your life . . .

GETTING STARTED

If you're new to *Interceptor*, it's a good idea to get a feel for your plane by using the *Free Flight* and *Practice Manoeuvres* options. DON'T go straight in at the deep end and select *Qualification* immediately, because unless you can handle the plane, you'll fail consistently and end up chewing the carpet in frustration. The most important manoeuvres to learn are the *Aileron roll, Inside Loop* and the *Vertical Half-loop*, which you'll need to perfect for *Qualification* and fighting Migs.



The Emergency Defence Operation completed. The President is safe. Hurrah, hurrah!

QUALIFICATION

Before you can go about the more important business of completing missions, you'll have to prove your mettle as a pilot by taking off from and landing on the Carrier deck. Although it sounds mind-numbingly easy in theory, most novice pilots find it extremely difficult in practice. Doubtless first-time flyers will try to fly a semi-circle around the carrier in order to approach from the rear, and will have found that it can be difficult to line yourself up properly with the Carrier. So, if you're having trouble with this, why not try the 'loop' method, pioneered by Mike Pattenden and perfected by myself *(Ha! — MP)*. To save all that monotonous 'lining up' business just do the following:

Take off from the Carrier and lock in the Afterburner, while ascending to roughly 1500 feet or thereabouts, but DON'T bank to the left or right, keep flying directly North. Then, as you reach about two miles distance from the Carrier, pull back hard on the joystick until you are flying upside-down ('inverted' in pilot-speak) back towards the Carrier. Now pull left or right to get the right way round again. Now fly over the Carrier deck (try not to exceed 3000 feet) and directly away to the South and perform the same manoeuvre again. i.e. get two miles away, pull back for inverted flight and then pull round to straighten the plane up. If all has gone well you should be approaching the south end of the deck (the conning tower should be to the right). Now reduce your thrust to about 50% and make any minor direction changes (use your compass to help you). As you get to within a mile range, drop your landing gear and arrestor hook and drop to about 200 feet. Now, as the Carrier begins to pass under you, pull down gently, open the air brakes (back arrow key) and you should snag the arrestor wires perfectly. Now reduce your thrust to minimum and you'll get the 'Qualification complete' message (providing you didn't come down too sharply and crash). Miss the wires and land safely and you won't qualify.

VISUAL CONFIRMATION

This is the first mission available to you after Qualification, and it's an absolute doddle. An unidentified aircraft is approaching from the Northwest, and your job is to approach it and find out what it is. You take off from the Moffett field airstrip and your vector for bogey is 310. Take off on Afterburner, keep on the cockpit view and head 310 by using the rudders, not by banking. As soon as the UFO appears on your 40 mile radar, select it as a target to obtain information on it's heading, speed and most importantly, altitude. As you approach, do your best to match altitudes with the UFO. Keep checking your map for any changes in direction the UFO may make and change your course immediately. As soon as you can see the UFO through your cockpit, you will get a message informing you that you have achieved confirmation of the aircraft. Now all you have to do is return to base to complete the mission. If the aircraft fires on you, simply return to base, as it's not worth risking your plane just to take out one lousy Mig.

EMERGENCY DEFENCE OPERATION

The President's plane is on its way to Moffett airfield for an emergency landing. It's suffered heavy missile damage and its escort plane has been destroyed. To complete this mission, you must keep the attacking Migs away from AF-1 (the President's plane) by whatever means. To do this, go straight for the Migs, the closest one first. Doubtless the Migs will open fire on you, and you must do your best to terminate both the Migs ASAP. You can't afford to waste time here, as the Migs stick to AF-1 like glue. If a Mig starts to break away from the pursuit, let it go. Only engage the ones that are in

play to WiN

close range of AF-1. If you manage to destroy all the Migs, or buy AF-1 enough time to get down safely, your mission is complete (after you've landed of course).

INTERCEPT STOLEN AIRCRAFT

Quite a toughie this one. Two F-16s have been stolen and are heading away at top speed, escorted by two Migs. Although you're advised to get the F-16s back safely, you can complete the mission just as effectively by blowing them both away, so just fly out to intercept them, and target the F-16s, which should be flying close together. Don't fire two missiles if both the F-16s are on screen, thinking you can destroy both of them in this way, because the targetting system will cause both missiles to lock onto the one targetted plane. So target one, fire a missile, and then toggle the targets using 'T' to select the other one for petrol-powered termination. After you've disposed of both F-16s, return to base. DON'T engage the Migs, the reason being you have barely enough fuel to complete the mission. If you waste your fuel on 5-minute long dogfights you won't have enough fuel to return to base.

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATION

A pilot has been shot down in combat and has only minutes to survive. To save him you must fly out to him and drop a rescue pod in his vicinity. Sounds easy, but it ain't, mainly because the computer is very fussy about how close the rescue has to be to the pilot. To ensure a successful drop, you should approach the pilot very low (under 250 feet) and very slow (no more than 30% thrust). You should also switch to the 'chase plane' rear view to obtain a better view of exactly where the pilot is as you approach him. When passing directly over the pilot, you should drop the pod, just as you see him appear behind the plane as you pass. If you release the pod too late, you'll have to abort and try again. The same goes if you release it too early.

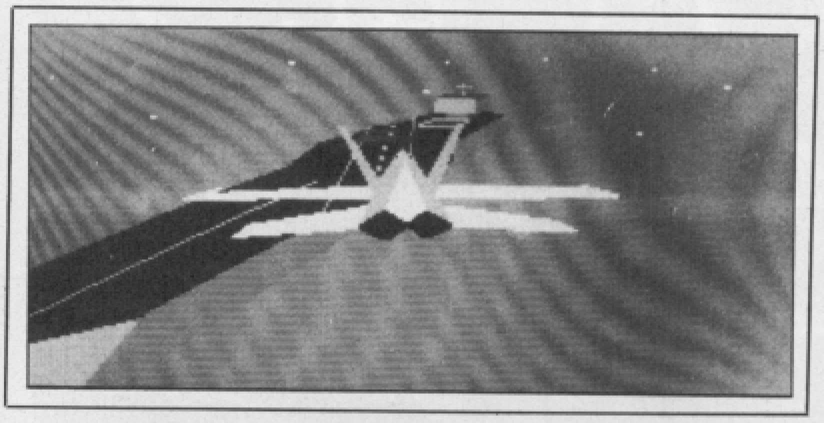
INTERCEPT CRUISE MISSILE

A bit of a doddle this one, in comparison with all the others. The Cruise missile acts just like a very fast Mig, but doesn't alter its course in the way that a plane would, so targetting is easy. However, problems arise when you realise that the missile is so fast, you may have difficulty in gaining enough ground on it to get it in missile range. As soon as you have the missile on the screen, you should select an AMRAAM and target it. What you shouldn't do is fire a missile before you get the 'IN RNG' message on your HUD and you hear the steady tone to indicate the missile is in range. Unlike Migs, you have to wait for the tone before firing, or the Cruise will just outrun your AMRAAM. As soon as you have full missile lock (perfect target AND tone) you should fire two missiles, just to be certain.

CARRIER SUB MISSION

This is the hardest one of the lot! The enemy shadow sub is positioned away to the Northwest and is protected by both Migs and the occasional Cruise missile. In this mission, you need ALL SIX of your missiles for attacking the sub, so you must avoid dogfighting totally. On your approach to the sub, stay below 500 feet. As soon as you get the sub on screen, drop to 95-100 feet. To make things difficult, your missile computer won't accept the sub-carrier as a valid target, and subsequently won't let you lock missiles onto it. Because of this, all missile targetting must be done manually. All of your six missiles must be fired directly at the Conning Tower of the sub-carrier, as nowhere else will register a hit. To target your missiles, try to imagine a cursor somewher betwen the two wing-indicators and the small cross above them on your HUD. As you get closer to the sub, slow down to about 50% and fire three missiles directly at the Conning Tower. Don't try to fire any more, as only three missiles can be airborne at any one time.

If all three missiles strike, you should pull up over the top and then spin round to approach from the other side. Fire your remaining three missiles at the Tower, and if all six hit, KABOOOOM! The sub-carrier goes under. If any of your missiles miss, return to your home carrier to re-fuel and re-arm, and then go back to attack again. You must be careful not to get too close to the sub-carrier, as although it's tempting to make the target area as large as possible, it's easy to leave it too late to pull out.



▲ *Closing in on the enemy carrier.*

GENERAL COMBAT

● Always use your AMRAAMs in preference to Sidewinders first, as these have a much longer range, so it's easier to lock onto a target with them.

● When using missiles, you must remember that it's not enough just to get your target in the centre of the screen. If you want to be absolutely certain that a missile will hit, keep chasing your target until the rapid pips change to a steady tone, indicating you're in range.

● Never fire more than one missile at any one target if there are many other Migs in the area. It may be tempting, but you need to be economical with your missiles if you want to get all the Migs.

● Don't waste your time using cannons. Very rarely does a Mig get within their range, and when it does, the cannon proves slow, clumsy and ineffective.

When a Mig launches a missile at you, don't fire off chaff or flares straight away, as the chaff may disperse, or the flare may burn out before the missile gets in range. Let a missile get within a mile (it shows up on your radar) before doing so.

● It may seem obvious, but never let a Mig out of your sight. Always monitor its altitude and match it at all times. If a Mig is directly behind you, spin over quickly so you're facing it. That way you can surprise him and knock him out with a missile before he has chance to react.

CHEAT

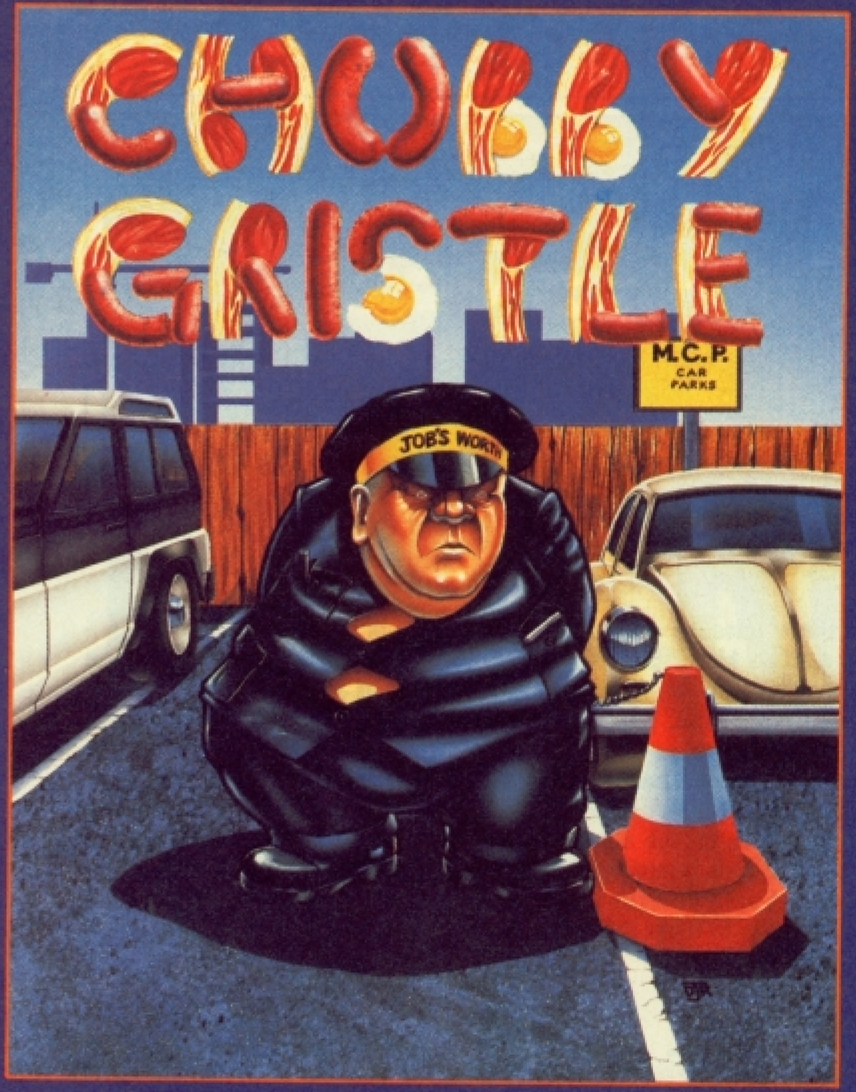
Here, courtesy of David Slack, is a listing for the less than ace pilots among you who can't manage the further missions in *Interceptor*. It allows you to choose to take part in any of the missions.

Method

1. Load AMIGA BASIC.
2. Type in the listing printed below.
3. Save the listing on disk.
4. Run the program (you will need to have the disk which you use as your DISK-LOG.)
5. Load Interceptor and insert DISK-LOG when asked to.
6. Now select option 6 on menu (SELECTABLE MISSION.)
7. Choose any one of the mission.

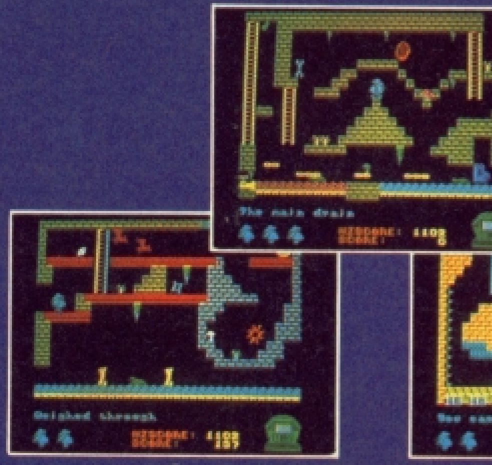
Listing

```
10 PRINT TAB(10) "★★
Interceptor cheat by
DAVID SLACK ★★"
20 PRINT :PRINT "Insert
your Interceptor Log disk
in drive 0"
30 PRINT "and press any
key:"
30 WHILE A$=""
40 A$=INKEY$
50 WEND
60 PRINT :PRINT "Please
wait . . ."
70 OPEN "R", #1,
"df0:config",1
80 FIELD #1,1 AS B$
90 LSET B$=CHR$(1)
100 PUT #1,2
110 FOR N=22 TO 27
120 PUT #1,N
130 NEXT N
140 CLOSE #1
150 PRINT :PRINT
"Finished"
```

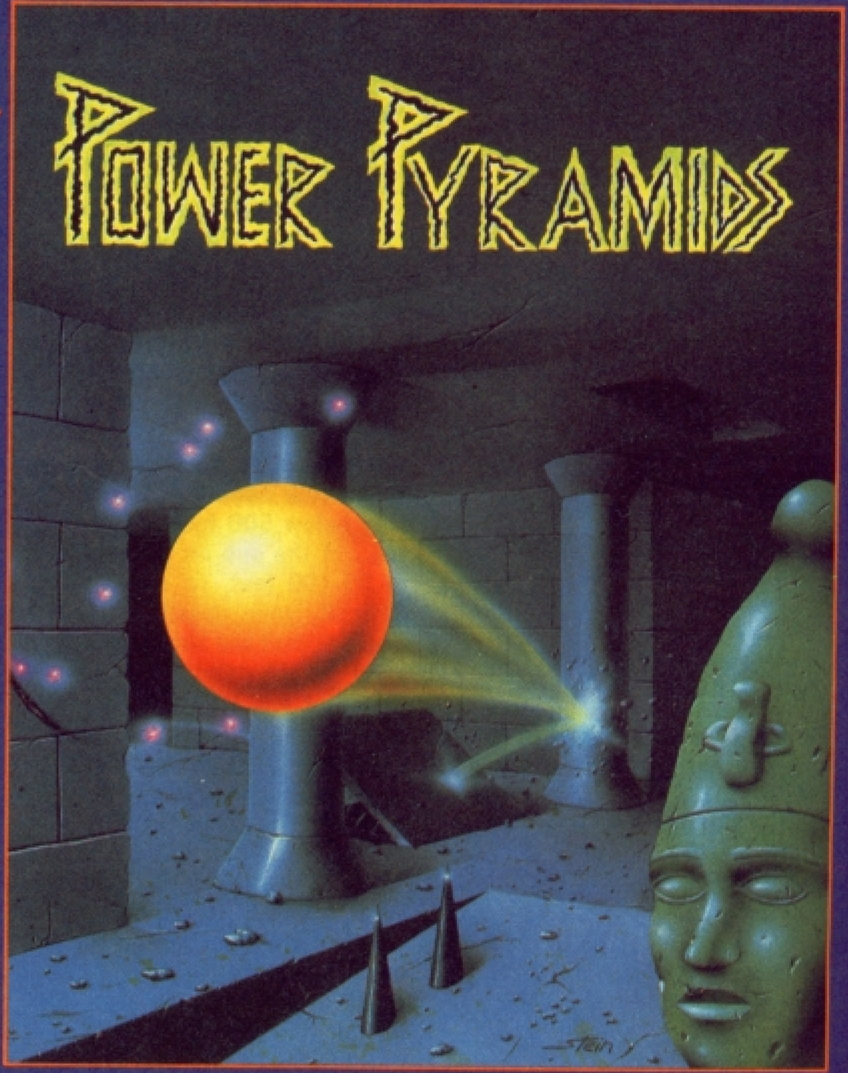


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Screenshots taken from Commodore



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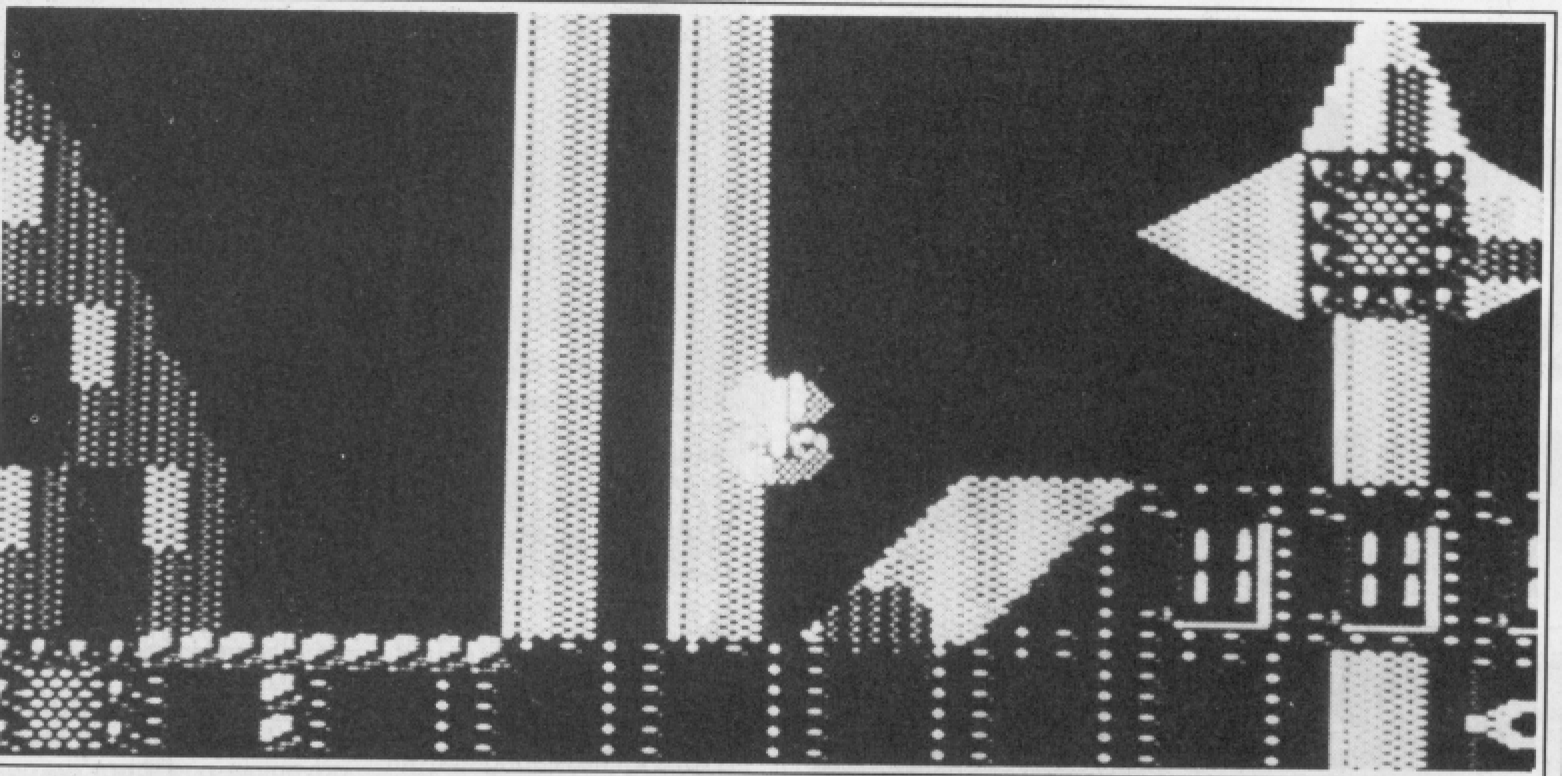
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Diamond

64/128
Destiny
Price: £9.99

It's good to see that someone's found the answer to overcrowding in prisons. The people of Zan don't mess around when it comes to dishing out heavy doses of penal servitude. Not only do they lock up villains and throw away the key, they jettison them into space and forget them. Cruel perhaps, but think about the savings to the taxpayer.

So these steel prison hulks orbited the heavens for hundreds of years, by which time you'd think the lifers on board woud have well and truly served their sentence. You'd be wrong of course, having failed to take account of 'advanced stogenic regeneration'. The prisoners have got a nasty dose of radiation from the burnt out engines and have mutated into hideous metal-eating monsters.

These guys aren't too fussy about their diet and think nothing of feasting on the hull of the prison ship itself — chomping huge great holes in the outer walls of the hull, which before long is looking like a Granny Smith with a bad case of maggot infestation. The big bonus to the prisoners' metallic diet is that they can eat out any time they like. Prison food never tasted so good and the mutoids are excaping in their droves, every one of them with a full stomach.

You act as a sort of supersonic screw, blasting the inmates as they make their escape bid and filling up the holes in the hull to keep the others in. Of course you need more than a trowel and a slap of plaster to accomplish this task, you are equipped with five diamond-tough Supertronics — versatile craft built for screws in space.

Supertronics can operate in several modes. Ordinarily Killar mode is the most effective for blasting the prisoners to bits, but you need to keep an eye on your energy which drains away rapidly in this mode. Energy can be restored in Solar mode, but unfortunately you can't shoot anything because you're far too busy soaking up the sun.

The job of patching up the holes is done in Rovar mode. You actually land on the surface near a hole, drive over it and fill it with the fire button. An easy task were it not for the hundreds of jailbirds trying to make a break for it. Contact with these seriously depletes the energy meter so you have to make a very quick job of patching up the hull. Apart from anything else, if you're not fast the holes appear more quickly than you patch them up.

Your five Supertronics are not the use-one-at-a-time craft you get in most games. You can switch from one supertronic to another at any time and in circumstances it is necessary to use two Supertronics together, for example to change the polarity switches which govern movement direction on the hull surface. Supertronics can also help each other out by swapping energy. If one Supertronic is running low and you don't have time to bask in Solar mode you can switch energy from a fully charged supertronic to a flat one.

If you are careless enough to let all your Supertronics run out of energy it's game over time. Much more likely is all the prisoners will munch their way to freedom before you can fill in all the holes. If you do manage it you can have a go at the more difficult levels all the way up to level five, which must be like trying to drink water from a tea strainer without getting your shoes wet. The graphics aren't spectacular, but they're good enough to hold up a middling to good game. On the sound front cassette users get the added bonus, if that's the word, of a free cassette featuring Destiny Records' new signing 'The Company She Keeps'. I didn't get a copy so I can't say much, but whatever it's like it has to be better than the soundtrack for the game.

Ken McMahon

DIAMOND — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

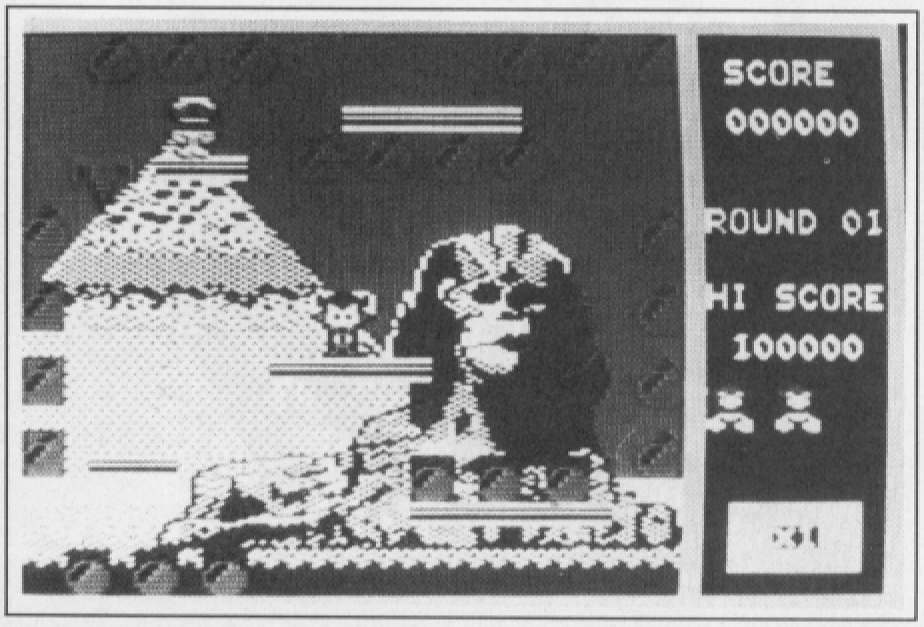
VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING
6

CHEAPO ROUND-UP



▲ *Tau Ceti*



▲ *Bombjack*

BOMBJACK

Encore

Elite's budget label has tied in the release of *Bombjack* on 16 bit with its revival as a cheapo. It's by no means a perfect conversion (blocky graphics), but it still retains the playability that makes the game so frustratingly appealing.

Collecting the bombs which litter up the screen in the right order for huge bonuses is the name of the game. A myriad of metallic nasties pursue Jack around the screen and the aim is simply to stay alive for as many screens as possible whilst running up a big score. A welcome re-release.(**6**)

KANE 2

Mastertronic

A sequel to a budget game? Yep, Marshall McGraw is back in another package of mini games with a cowboy theme. Unfortunately much of the same gameplay is in there too. You begin chasin' a train, shootin' baddies and avoidin' obstacles in your path to a shoot out with still more baddies in a fort (or is that bodies in a fart?). A new angle appears in stage three with the Marshall doing a bit of bronco busting, then making good his escape with an Indian princess. Crafty beggar.

Not a lot has changed from *Kane I,* except that the gameplay in the original was much more fun and far less fiddly. There's nothing here as good as the duckshoot in the original, it just strings out an old idea for a few sovs more. (**5**)

▼ *Kane 2*



TAU CETI

Rack It

Released back in July '86 on CRL, and programmed by John Twiddy *Tau Ceti* took its lead from games like *Elite* and *Quake Minus One,* which offered atmospheric adventures set in space.

The tale concerns a planet overrun by robot defence systems after a plague. Earth sends in a single ground skimmer to close down the fusion reactor on the planet and thus drain the rogue systems of their power supply. You have to search the terrain for some cooling rods before you can get inside the reactor, whilst avoiding the many robots intent on stopping you. It's a clever blend of strategy, adventure and shoot 'em up, nothing new, but still worth your time. Graphics are good, and whilst sound is limited, atmosphere isn't.(**7**)

HUMDINGER

Alternative Software

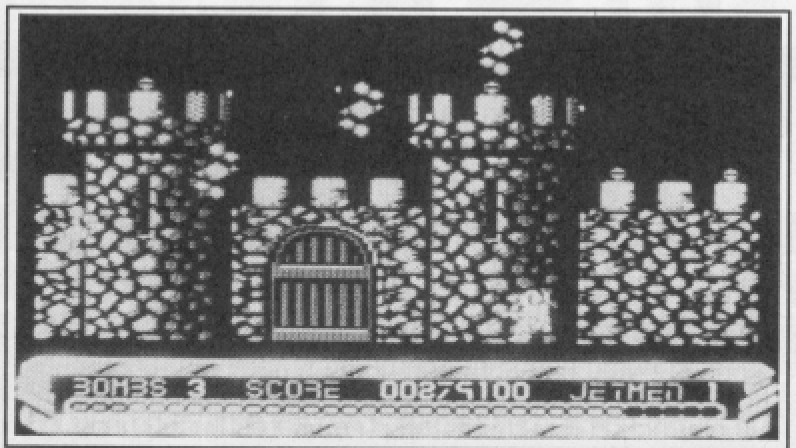
This could be any one of fifty cheapo shoot 'em ups on the market. Shooting wave upon wave of nasties gets you extras in the shape of pearl necklaces (nice) worth fuel and extra lives. Particularly fiddly controls make it all a rather frustrating and unrewarding experience.(**4**)

SUPER CUP FOOTBALL

Rack It

Sparse graphics don't help the appeal of this cheapo footy

CHEAPO ROUND-UP



Humdinger

game, but that apart it's not as bad as many full-price attempts that are still on the market.

Nevertheless you'd be well advised saving your money for Microprose's *Microsoccer* game which promises to sweep everything, including *International Soccer* in its path.**(6)**

THE FUTURE ZONE

Compass Software

Keith Campbell frequently gives home made adventures a good write-up, but the same is rarely true of their arcade counterparts. This was made using *SEUCK*, and boy does it show! Level upon level of bloody dull scenery and stultifying gameplay. *SEUCK* was primarily programmed for home enjoyment, not commercial adaptaion and furthermore it can be used to better effect than this.**(1)**

MAD FLUNKY

Alternative Software

Written by Don Priestley, programmer of the *Trap Door* games, *Mad Flunky* concerns the attempts of a manservant in Buck House to collect all the Royal family's autographs.

The large, bold graphics give *Flunky* an appeal that's belied by its gameplay. It's a search and explore arcade adventure which involves matching various items with various people to achieve your aim. Pretty average stuff when you consider what else is on offer this month.**(5)**

GAUNTLET

Kixx

This is US Gold's new cheapo label. And what a first release! There's not much you can say about *Gauntlet* that hasn't been said already. Despite being bugged, it provides a great rendition of the classic Atari coin-op's gameplay.

Control of any one of the four characters, two player option, frenetic on-screen action and maze negotiating make it one of the most successful conversions on the 64.

A guaranteed number one and our cheapo of the month.**(9)**
(Released Aug. 17).

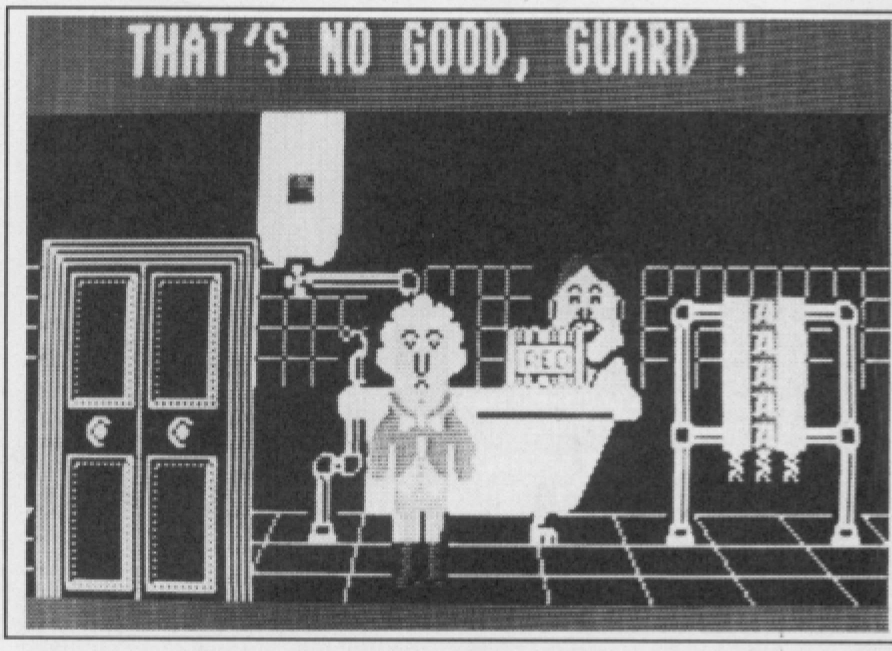
VECTORBALL

Mad

This is a futuristic game which supposedly combines "the speed of ice hockey, the precison of netball and the complex curves of crown green bowls". The truth is that it more resembles a mixture of Arsenal-style football, one of those games you get in a Christmas cracker and trainspotting.

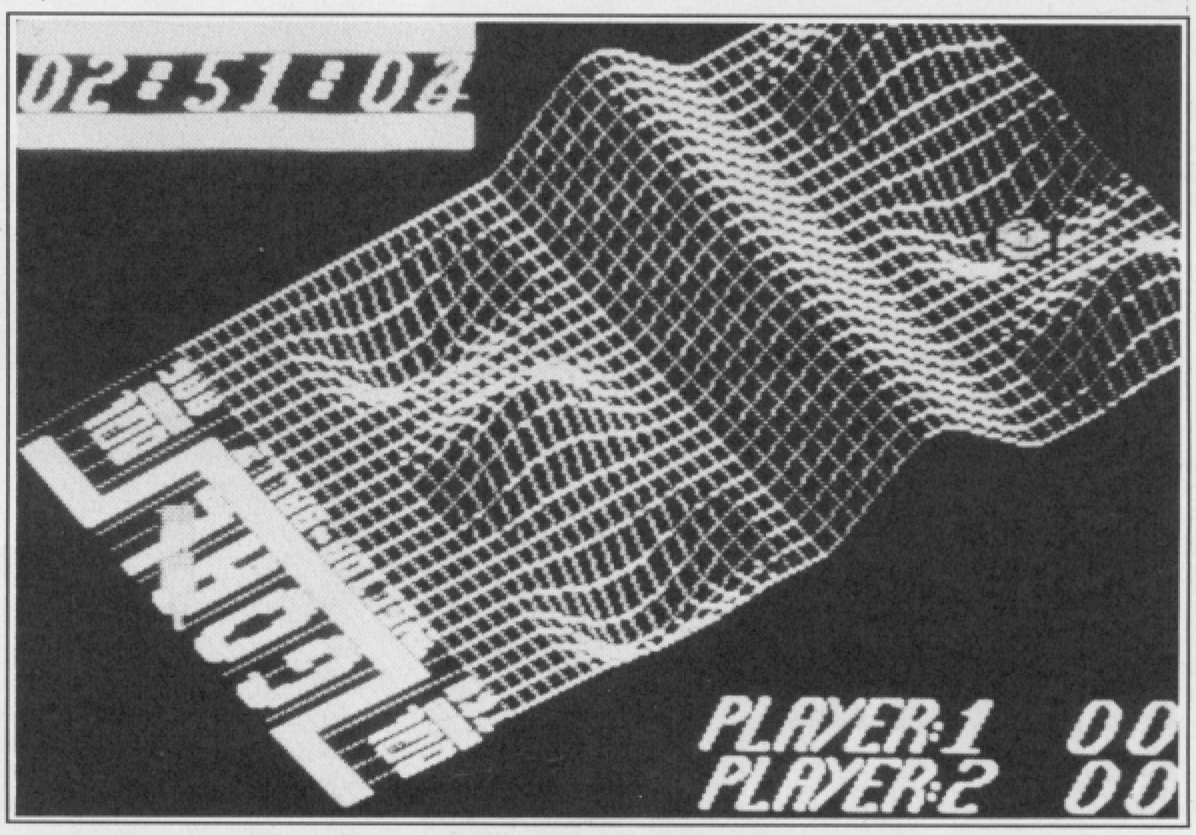
A tedious loading sequence is followed by a game of football played by a couple of gyroscopic clothes pegs on the most uneven surface seen since Wembley. Control is downright impossible, whilst the pitch is divided into two screens. No poofy scrolling here!

It all amounts to a tedious waste of money, a bit much really considering it's a MAD game.**(3)**



Mad Flunky

Vectorball



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Letters

Dick Brain

Since nobody sends jokes to CU these days (did they ever?) I thought I would send you a couple (well — one!), and please don't print my full address for fear of reprisals from the masses. Right brace yourself:

What do you call a man with no arms or legs swimming in a pool?

Cleverdick!

Andy
Bridge of Allen,
Stirlingshire

That's not very funny! Our publisher's got no arms or legs!

Left out

As I can't think of a decent way to start my letter, I will start with a question I've been wondering about for a long time. Who duzz Buzz? Is it Mad Mike P. who swells off about supporting (ugh, dare I say it) West Ham, (yuk, wash my mouth out with soapy water) or is it perhaps the wonderful Ferdy Hamilton (at last I've found someone else who supports QPR — that's two now)? By the way Ferdy, did you get that crisp, hard-earned tenner off that weirdo from Sheffield who thought that Sheffield Wednesday would finish higher than QPR in the League? I watched them play QPR and found them to be brainless psychopaths. Anyway back to the mag and who writes Buzz. Is it Gary Whitta who wrote one letter and then got a job reviewing games for you? Please answer my question and don't make some clever remark that makes everyone cringe with embarrasment at it's utter patheticness.

As you have probably realised by now I scrutinise every issue and can tell you any word you want from anywhere in any ish. What do you mean you don't believe me? Just look at this — May ish, page 14, column 2, line 6, word 3 = disasters. They don't call me 'god-you-get-on-my-nerves-you-big-headed-★★★★' for nothing.

Brilliant news that Commodore have dropped the price of the Amiga by £100. Another £300 lopped of the price and then I might be able to buy one.

Oh, yes, I'd like to say 'hi there' to Julian Rignall and Steve Jarratt (we don't mind where you come from, honest).

Oh well, it's time for my pills now and anyway, Songs Of Praise is on now so I'll see you around again sometime.

Matthew Harfitt
Bristol

To our knowledge 'Donkey' Hamilton never got his crisp tenner. He never got the money off his welching Ed either. Gary Whitta has indeed written to us in the past, but that's not why he's doing game reviews now. Buzz is written by Nick O'Kelly most of the time.

Double aargh

ARRGH! I can't stand it. Please, please can you tell me if Double Dragon's coming out on computer and if so, I hope it's a good one with a continue mode.

David Newell,
Bexley,
Kent

Yes! Release is planned for Sept/Oct.

Suggestions boxed

With the dawning of Aquarius, I thought that this was the perfect time to write to you guys. I just thought CU needed a few changes.

1) A whinge page; for the amount of whinging poms (sorry, I mean people) who take up about 90% of the letter section with the sort of things that I would only find lurking in the depths of my toilet!
2) A horoscope page; (of course!) presented by who else but Nancy Reagan.
3) Romantic stories; like . . . Mike falls passionately in love with his Amiga.
4) A hygiene section; as a result of Mike's love affair, he gets so excited one night that his affair leads his Amiga to catch a new strain of virus. Gasp! Real intimate stuff! (Could even make page three in Marvel Comics!)
5) A Neil page; for fans to keep the up to date with the latest pansies for your gardens or hair. Also, for all you fashion freaks out there, the latest designer label flares available on the market.
6) A beauty page; (well, why not? You have everything else don't you?!!)

CU later alligators (ha! ha!)

A Bogen
Melbourne,
Australia

PS Didn't I see you guys on TV not long ago at Stonehenge, throwing pansies (and kisses) at the police???

Listen here you sonofadyslexicwallaby CU tramples on hippies. As for your suggestions — we don't think we'll take any up. Here's one of our own: don't go into publishing.

Cack Cracker

I was absolutely flabbergasted at the sheer self indulgence of Turbo Crackers' letter to you (July) entitled "A day in the life". This guy has just got to have some sort of superiority complex!

It is obvious, from reading his letter, that he wrote it for no other reason but to try to amplify his own importance (or lack of it), and generally show-off. Also, what sort of money is he receiving from the dole?! I wish I could afford to go to all the places he has been to for his so-called "Conferences"!

It also seems he prides himself on being a common thief, as well as a big-head. As for him saying (I quote) "I've arranged a get together of about 75 computer hackers, from all over the world. But you won't find us, we'll be fully aware of people trying to catch us"! I find it difficult to understand his reasoning behind this statement. If I were really having a giant hackers party, I wouldn't be so stupid as to write to the computer press in advance and tell them about it.

Turbo cracker may say "What does he know anyway, he doesn't know any of us 'crackers'". Well, the facts are these; I myself *used* to belong to a hackers group, and I also know my programming as well. (I have written many demos and a couple of games on the 64 and a bit on the Amiga). You may really be part of a 'group' called the Front (I know very many groups personally, and I ain't ever heard of yours. Maybe you crack ZX80 games!). But I'm certain that all real hackers out there would be ashamed to have you as part of their group. No honest hacker (if you follow my reasoning!) would give even a remote clue to anybody unknown to them, not one iota of information on what activities they are planning.

My conclusion is this; Turbo Cracker is swapping programs with some people. He has no real knowledge of programming, but he read an article on piracy and decided that he'd like to take an ego trip and write to your mag to tell the world how utterly, utterly stupid he is!

I'm not writing this letter for or against piracy (just about everyone who is reading this magazine has, at one time, accepted a copy of a program from a friend without payment, even if I may be so bold, the people who work in the software industry and its associated press! It is a fact of human nature that we all will gladly accept anything, as long as we don't have to pay for it.

Finally, I will end this letter by pleading with anyone else like Turbo Cracker, thinking of writing in to scoff at the software houses inability to catch them pirating software, to think about this: If they really wanted to, the software houses could very easily track down nearly all of the main hackers' groups in this country. When I first tried to contact people, with regard to swapping programs. (Many openly — and quite obvious to the magazines I'm sure — advertised in the back

pages of various computer mags) I was virtually flooded with letters (more than 90 in fact), including many, many lists of programs that people wanted to swap. Now I could have been anybody at all, even a software house, and now I have the names and addresses of 90% of all the groups in this country. (Many more abroad). The S/W houses are not stupid, and I'm certain that they also hold nearly all these addresses themselves, but for some reason, (which only they know) they refuse to act against them. (Although, at the time of writing, one very famous Amiga hackers' group has just been busted, but they were very large and this was probably their downfall).

I don't like having to 'steal' programs. (Yes, there's no way around it fellow hackers, it is stealing!) I try to buy as many originals as I can afford. But when someone comes along with a big box of disks full of programs, for which I've no money left to buy, (let's face it, 25 to 40 quid for a program on the Amiga has got to be a bit steep!) and says "wanna copy these for nowt' mate". That little devil which is in all of us appears on my shoulder, and all my morals melt in hell! It's happened to everyone, and I believe no-one who says otherwise!

Mike Berry aka 'Kernal'
Atherton,
Gtr Manchester

It's simply not true that hackers don't talk about their activities, sometimes we simply can't get them off the phone. Oh, and we always accept games without payment.

Declining standards

● I feel that overall the standard of your mag is pretty good. One section that I think could be improved upon is the letters page. The standard of letters that get printed upon the limited space of two pages is sometimes diabolical. One that springs to mind is Andrew Sedgwick's letter in the April issue. By the way the letter reads, it seems that Andrew does not know any other adjective except 'kool'. If that is a letter you regard as being of a high enough standard to print upon the pages of CU I hate to think what standard of literacy is like in the letters you do not print (*Hazard a guess — Ed*). Anyway, enough groans for one letter.

The best piece of news I have had the good fortune to read in computer mags lately is that about the NEC PC Engine. Judging by screen shots published in various magazines the PC Engine must have the best dedicated graphics chip available on a home console. Even the Amiga's superb graphics chip would have trouble matching the excellence of the PC Engine. The PC Engine is definitely on my hardware shopping list, and I will be purchasing one as soon as it becomes available in the UK.

Enough of the future and on to the present. I own a Commodore 64 and disk drive. I feel particular disgust with 16-bit owners of Amigas and STs saying the 8-bit market is dead. Anyone who buys software at regular intervals will see that new developments are being made all the time. Also anybody who accesses Compunet will see even more amazing developments in sound and graphics.

D. Emmins
London E15

Save your money for an Amiga, it'll give you more than a PC Engine ever will. You're right about the 8-bit market, it's still alive and in reasonable health. Not sure if this improved the standard of our letters page though.

Demos

● I wonder if any of your readers can help me. I own an Amiga 500 and I attended the recent Commodore show. While I was there I saw some demos (on the Amiga) by two people called "Ian & Mick". I was very impressed with these demos and I would like to obtain copies of them. If any of your readers could point me in the right direction I would be very grateful.

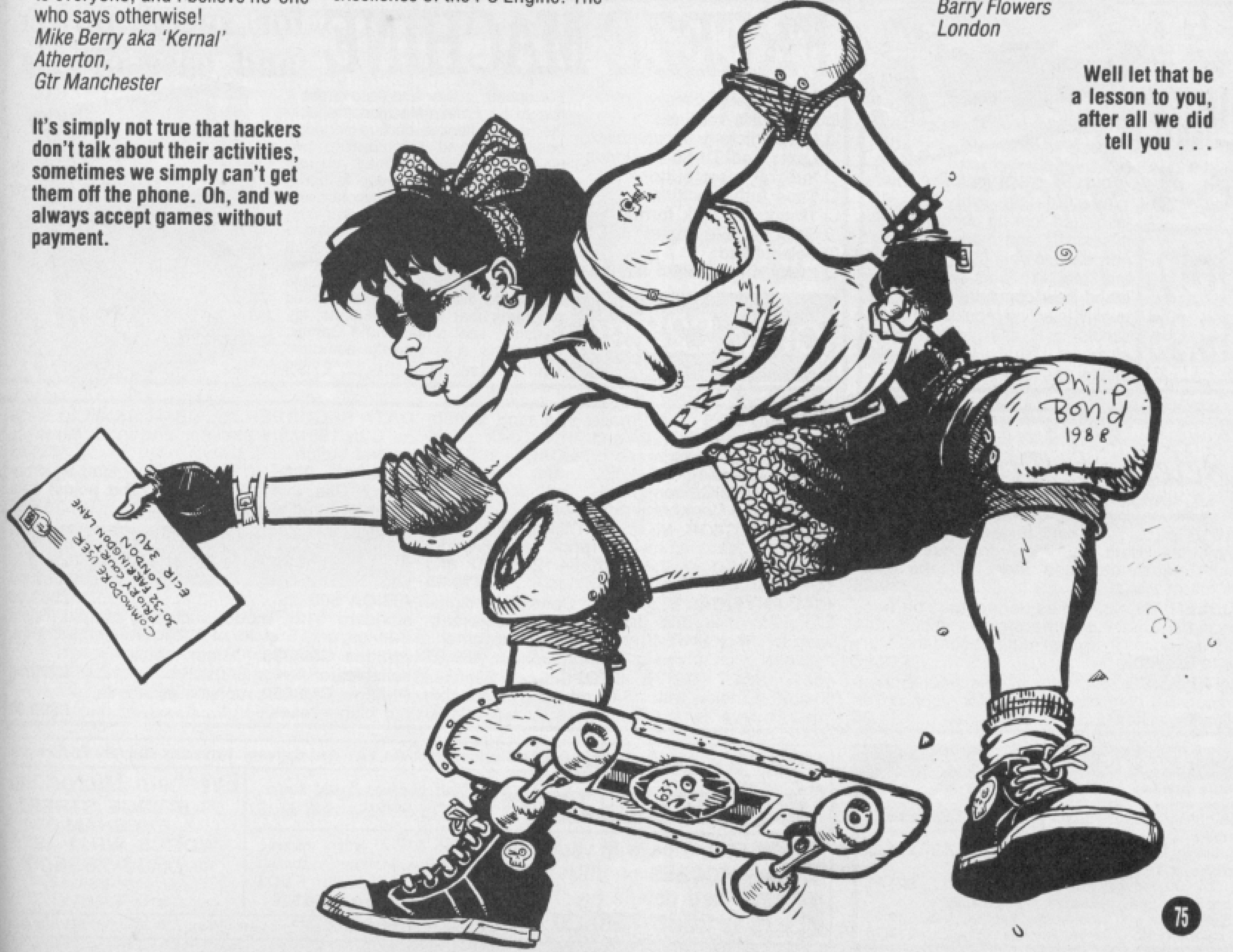
J.M. Wright
21 Dudly Rd, Honeybourne,
Evesham,
Worcs

Warning

● July's issue of Play to Win, told us how to reset a 64 by connecting Pin 1 to Pin 3 in the user port by using a paper clip. It works perfectly and I enjoyed getting infinite lives on games like *Jailbreak*. But then I started experimenting with the paper clip and started sticking it in the cartridge port any old way. I also did the same with the user port. This ruined my computer totally, and I've had to fork out £25 because of my stupid mistake. I'd just like to warn all those people who've read last issues Play to Win, that they couldn't experiment with the paperclip unless they want a broken computer. Also why don't companies make cartridge games anymore?

Barry Flowers
London

Well let that be a lesson to you, after all we did tell you . . .

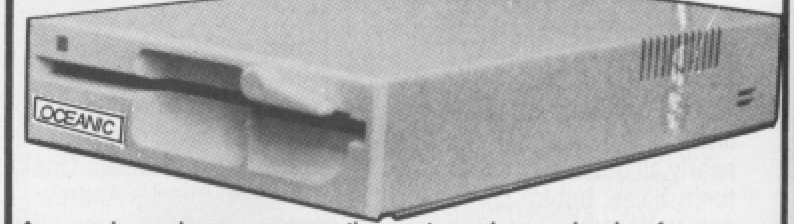


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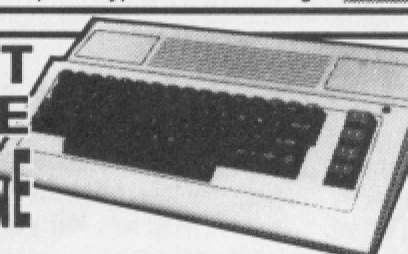
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BARBARIAN 2

Julian Rignall and Steve Jarratt grab their broadswords and gird up their loins to bring you the complete guide to *Barbarian II*.

LEVEL ONE

Stabbers are nasty little pains in the groin (quite literally) and can create problems. However, they can be jumped (useful if you don't want to hang around). If you do fight, just keep on doing a front kick followed quickly by a low chop. The front kick sends the Stabber staggering back, the low chop misses, but it rushes forwards, allowing you to front kick it again. It does this in an endless loop, so with a little practice, the Stabber can be defeated without fear of losing any health points.

Sauran Beasts are deadly if you stand up too long — they bite your head off. When it takes a step towards you, low chop and take a step back. If you miss, take another step back and repeat.

Neanderthal Men are despatched with head chops. Just head chop, take a step back, head chop and so on.

Floaters are killed by repeatedly front kicking, walking two steps forward and front kicking again. Keep on repeating the move and there should be no problem. If you miss, take two steps back and repeat the process.

Just front kick an Ape repeatedly as he approaches — he falls back and approaches again, allowing you to kick him again. Just practice to get your timing right.

Mutant Chickens should be low chopped — time your hit so it's standing upright and you'll chop it in half.



Cave the Troll's head in.

LEVEL TWO

The Orc Guard drives you against a wall and needs repeated head chops to kill him. If he starts stabbing you, just do a low chop and continue with head chops — no problem.

Slithering Things are dealt with easily by repeatedly low chopping (if you miss, take a step back and let it approach again). If you time your hit properly, you'll chop its head off.

When encountering a crab, let it come close, kick (it'll try and nip you, but miss) and low chop. Timing is of the essence, but a little practice makes perfect. If you miss, take a step back and repeat the process.

Constantly head chop a Stinger and it won't ever touch you — all other moves are useless.

Carnivores are one of the deadliest of *Barbarian II*'s denizens. Low chops are the best way to deal with them, and if they jump at you quickly do a head chop. Timing is critical.

Low chops for Cave Trolls, followed by a step back before low chopping again. They're hardy little beggers, so stick at it.

LEVEL THREE

Time your jumps so you leap as the Pit Thing is withdrawing into its hole and you'll never be troubled.

Orclets are killed by repeated and well-timed low chops.

Keep on kicking Gobblers as they get close, and they won't get close enough to have a nibble on your nether regions. If you're feeling particularly confident, have a crack at lopping the head off one by kicking it a couple of times, retreating a few steps and aiming a low chop at its neck.

Giant Grubs are a bit of a headache, but well-timed kicks should provide a remedy.

Eyes are easily destroyed using repeated head chops.

The biggest and toughest of all characters is the Dungeon Master. A combination of low and head chops works well, depending on whether he is hitting (low chop) or kicking (head chop). When the DM is approaching, try a flying neck chop — if your timing is correct, the results are spectacular.

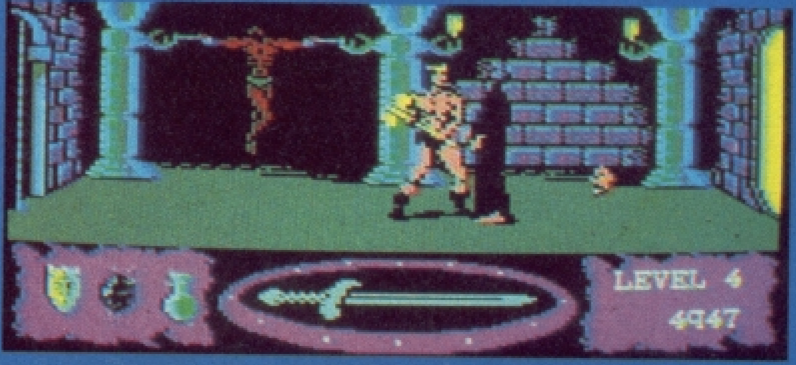
LEVEL FOUR

On the first screen, turn around and walk backwards — you'll lose energy, but not as much compared with trying to battle forwards.

When you confront the Great Demon, stand back and do a flying neck chop followed quickly by a low chop. Retreat as quickly as possible and repeat the move. If you're having problems, retreat after the neck chop.

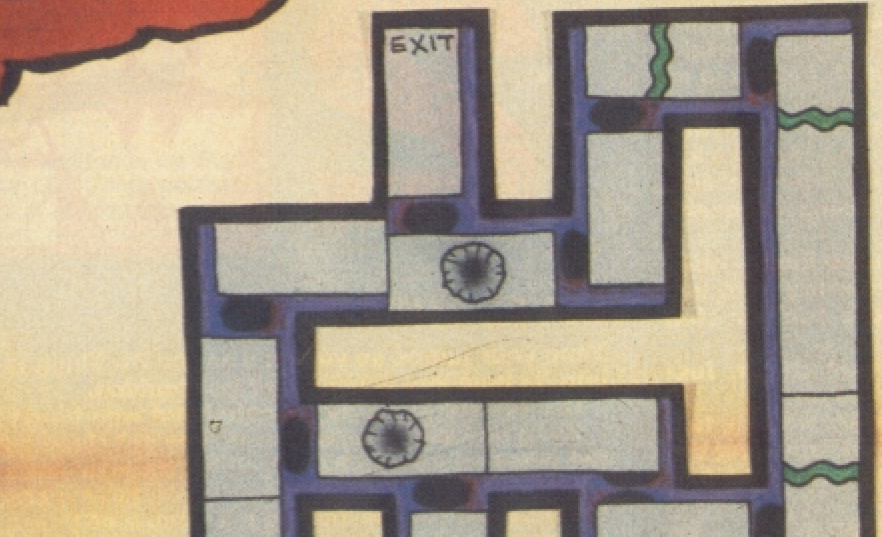
The final confrontation with Drax is very tricky. Line Barby (or Mariana) so he (or she) covers the hanging corpse on the wall. Wait until you think Drax's magic blast is about to stop, and do a flying neck chop to coincide with it. Timing is extremely tricky, and it's more of a gut feeling than anything else that gets you through. . .

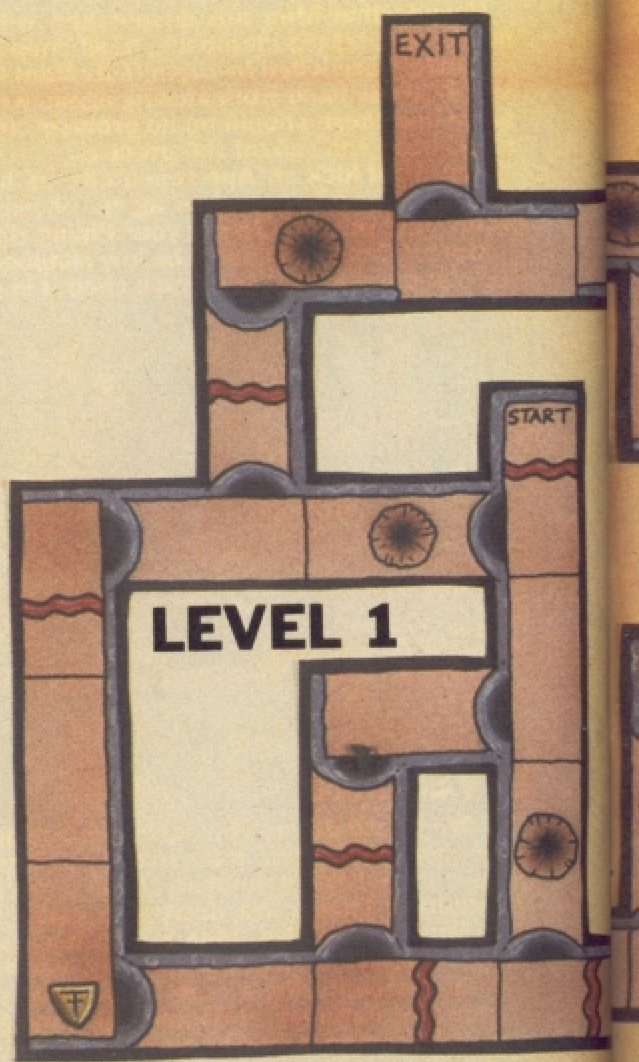
Success at last.



BARBA

THE

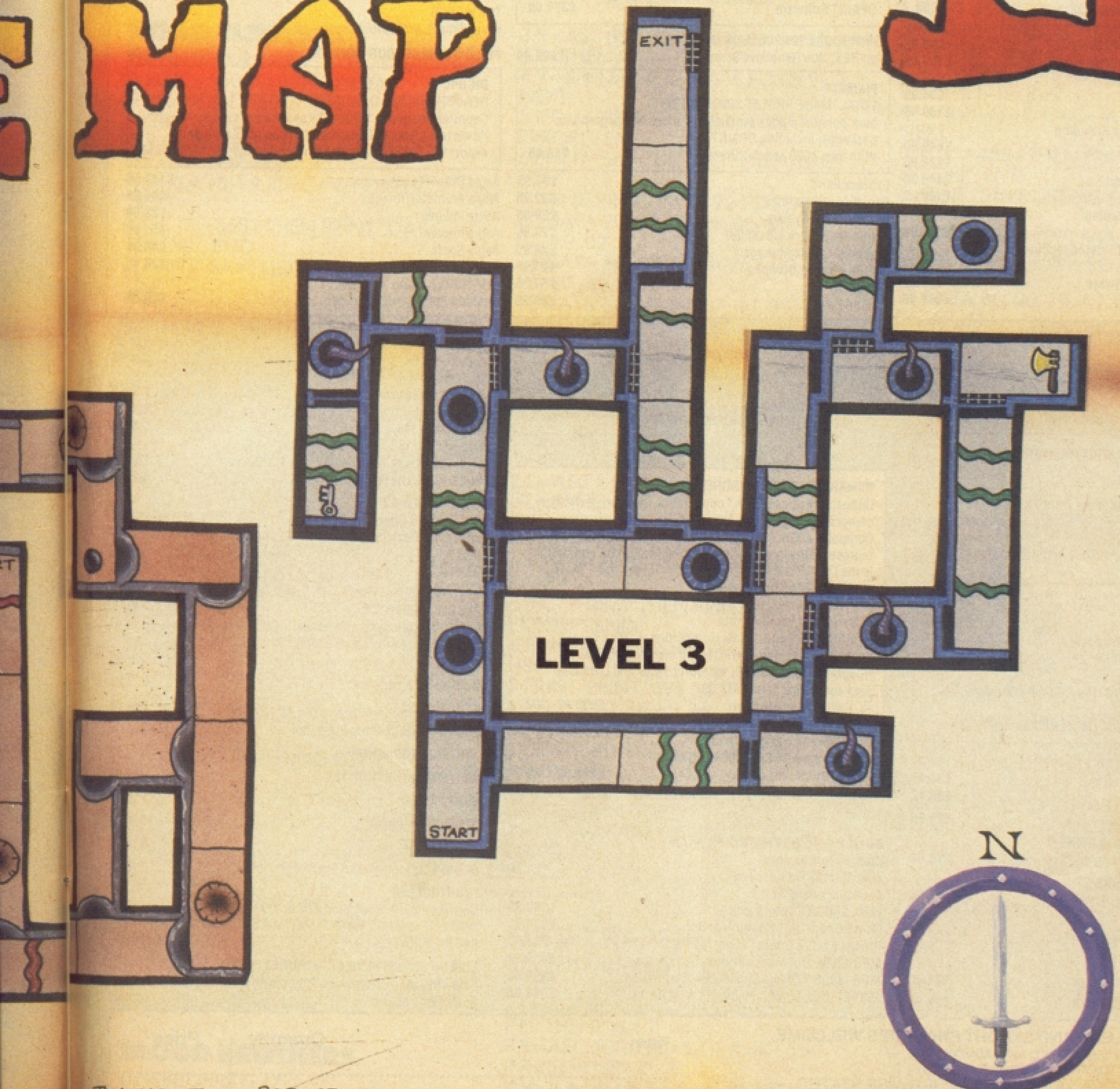




MAPPED BY JULIAN RIGNALL & STEVE JARRATT   ART BY STEVE JARRATT

ARIAN II

E MAP



THANKS TO ROB STEVENS & JOE WALKER OF PALACE SOFTWARE.

the god-like genius of GARY PENN

Now just in case you're feeling neglected for some more recent cracks, here's a few of Tim and Ian Fraser's latest cracks.

ROAD BLASTERS

```
0 PRINTCHR$ (147)
1 FORI=560 TO 598: READA$
2 L=ASC (LEFT$(A$,1)): L=L−55: IFL
<5THENL=L+7
3 R=ASC (RIGHT$(A$,1)): R=R−55:
IFR<5THENR=R+7
4 V=(L★16)+R: C=C+V: POKEI,V:
NEXT
5 IFC <> 3682 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!": END
6 PRINT "SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE."
7 PRINT: PRINT "SYS 560 TO START."
10 DATA 20, 56, F5, A9, 78, 8D, D0,
08, A9, 3A
11 DATA 8D, D1, 08, 4C, 10, 08, A9,
4D, 8D, 78
12 DATA 07, A9, 02, 8D, 79, 07, 4C,
00, 07, A9
13 DATA A5, 8D, D6, 2A, 4C, 10, 80,
00, 00, 00
```

VIXEN

```
0 PRINT CHR$ (147)
1 FORI=576 TO 615: READA$
2 L=ASC (LEFT$(A$,1))F: L=L−55: IFL
<5THENL=L+7
3 R=ASC (RIGHT$(A$,1)): R=R−55:
IFR<5THENR=R+7
4 V=(L★16) +R: C=C+V: POKEI,V:
NEXT
5 IFC<>3871 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!": END
6 PRINT "SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE."
7 PRINT: PRINT "SYS 576 TO START."
10 DATA 20, 56, F5, A9, 50, 8D, 9C,
03, A9, 02
11 DATA 8D, 9D, 03, 4C, E7, 02, A9,
5D, 8D, D3
12 DATA 09, A9, 02, 8D, D4, 09, 4C,
12, 08, A9
13 DATA A5, 8D, 02, 0D, AF, 0D, 4C,
11, 08
READY
```

Listing gives infinite lives.

BLOOD BROTHERS

```
0 PRINTCHR$ (147)
1 FORI=592 TO 619: READA$
2 L=ASC (LEFT$(A$,1)): L=L−55:
IFL<5THENL=L+7
3 R=ASC (RIGHT$(A$,1)): R=R−55:
IFR<THEN R=R+7
4 V=(L★16) +R: C=C+V: POKEI,V:
NEXT
5 IFC<>3018 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!": END
6 PRINT "SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE."
7 PRINT: PRINT "SYS 592 TO START."
10 DATA 20, 56, F5, A9, 60, 8D, D7,
02, A9, 02
11 DATA 8D, D8, 02, 4C, A7, 02, A9,
EA, 8D, 81
12 DATA 67, 8D, 09, 67, 4C, 85, 13,
00, 00, 00
READY.
```

Infinite energy, both players.

BIONIC COMMANDO

```
0 PRINTCHR$(147)
1 FOR I=560 TO 597: READA$
2 L=ASC (LEFT$(A$,1)): L=L−55:
IFL<5 THENL=L+7
3 R=ASC (RIGHT$(A$,1)): R=R−55:
IFR<THEN R=R+7
4 V=(L★16)+R: C=C+V: POKEI,V:
NEXT
5 IFC<>3569 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!": END
6 PRINT "SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE."
7 PRINT: PRINT "SYS 560 TO START."
10 DATA 20, 56, F5, A9, 78, 8D, D0,
08, A9, 3A
11 DATA 8D, D1, 08, 4C, 10, 08, A9,
4D, 8D, B7
12 DATA 13, A9, 02, 8D, B8, 13, 4C,
00, 10, A9
13 DATA A5, 8D, 5E, 1D, 4C, 00, 05,
00, 00, 00
READY.
```

Infinite lives.

STREET HASSLE

```
0 PRINTCHR$(147)
1 FOR I=560 TO 608: READA$
2 L=ASC (LEFT$(A$,1)): L=L−55:
IFL<THENL=L+7
3 R=ASC (RIGHT$(A$,1)): R=R−55:
IFR<5THENR=R+7
4 V=(L★16)+R: C=C+V: POKEI,V:
NEXT
5 IFC<>5237 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!": END
6 PRINT "SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE."
7 PRINT: PRINT "SYS 560 TO START."
10 DATA 20, 56, F5, A9, 40, 8D, 29,
04, A9, 02
11 DATA 8D, 2A, 04, 4C, 40, 03, A2,
11, BD, 4E
12 DATA 02, 9D, 99, 08, CA, 10, F7,
4C, 1B, 08
13 DATA A9, 09, 8D, AA, 08, A9, A5,
8D, A1, 0B
14 DATA 8D, 94, 09, EA, EA, EA, EA,
EA, 00, 00
READY.
```

Infinite lives. Also allows you to select starting level up to no. 9.

DREAM WARRIORS

```
0 PRINT CHR$ (147)
1 FOR I=576 TO 620: READA$
2 L=ASC (LEFT$(A$,1)): L=L−55:
IFL<5THENL=L+7
3 R=ASC (RIGHT$(A$,1)): R=R−55:
IFR<THEN R=R+7
4 V=(L★16)+R: C=C+V: POKEI,V:
NEXT
5 IFC<>4604 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!": END
6 PRINT "SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE."
7 PRINT: PRINT "SYS 605 TO START."
10 DATA A9, 4D, 8D, 46, 11, A9, 02,
8D, 47, 11
11 DATA 4C, 00, 10, A9, 00, 8D, 03,
BA, A9, A5
12 DATA 8D, 6E, 9F, 8D, 9C, B3, 4C,
8B, 0A, 20
13 DATA 56, F5, A9, 78, 8D, D0, 08,
A9, 3A, 8D
14 DATA D1, 08, 4C, 10, 08
READY.
```

Infinite energy.

MICKEY MOUSE

```
0 PRINT CHR$ (147)
1 FOR I=560 TO 623: READA$
2 L=ASC (LEFT$(A$,1)): L=L−55:
IFL<5THENL=L+7
3 R=ASC (RIGHT$ (A$,1)): R=R−55:
IFR<5THENR=R+7
4 V=(L★16)+R: C=C+V: POKEI,V:
NEXT
5 IFC<>7260 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!": END
6 PRINT "SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE."
7 PRINT: PRINT "SYS 560 TO START."
10 DATA 20, 56, F5, A9, 78, 8D, D3,
08, A9, 3A
11 DATA 8D, D4, 08, 4C, 10, 08, A9,
4D, 8D, 35
12 DATA 08, A9, 02, 8D, 36, 08, 4C,
00, 08, A9
13 DATA 00, 8D, 4C, AE, 8D, 85, B8,
8D, 4F, BB
14 DATA A9, 65, 8D, FA, FF, A9, 02,
8D, FB, FF
15 DATA 4C, 20, 80, 48, AD, 0D, DD,
A9, 01, 85
16 DATA 57, 68, 40, DE, FL, EP, PA, RD,
00, 00
READY.
```

Infinite water as well as a tower advance feature (tap restore).

the god-like genius of GARY PENN

Lee Callis of Evington in Leicester can get off his knees now because I. Robot from Reading (don't believe you're really called that) has sent in the following cheats he asked for in the August edition.

PAPERBOY

```
10 REM HACKED BY 1,ROBOT
20 PRINT CHR$ (147) "NOW TYPE
LOAD (RETURN)"
30 FOR A=300 TO 355:READ
B:POKEA, B:NEXT
40 DATA 169,76,141,242,3,169,
248,141
50 DATA 243,3,169,252,141,244,
3,76
60 DATA 13,8,169,167,141,48,3,169
70 DATA 2,141,49,3,169,208,141,38
80 DATA 8,169,32,141,39,81,169,96
90 DATA 141,43,8,169,123,141,45,8
100 DATA 169,35,141,46,8,76,13,8
RUN (RETURN)
```

When the 64 resets type
SYS300 (RETURN)
After a short while it will reset again so you can enter
SYS318
and you will have loadsalives

SPACE HARRIER

```
TYPE LOAD (RETURN)
PRESS PLAY ON TAPE
WHEN THE 64 RESETS ENTER
POKE1011,248:POKE10,12,252:RUN
(RETURN)
WHEN THE 64 RESETS AGAIN ENTER
POKE816, 167:POKE817,
2:POKE2096, 248:POKE2097,
252:SYS2061 (RETURN)
AND ENTER ANY OF THESE
POKE 5834,96 INFINITE TIME
POKE 6010,173 INFINITE LIVES
POKE 2214,0-255 TIMER
POKE 7236,0:POKE7231,0 AUTO FIRE
POKE 6666,234 SMART BOMB
POKE 14212,234 SPEEDS THE GAME
UP
POKE 6060,60
SYS 2128
```

Now you can fly through objects

DRAGONS LAIR

For infinite Dirks

```
10 I=49152
20 READ A: IF=256 THEN 30
21 T=T+A:POKE I,A:I=I+1:GOTO 20
30 IF T=8477 THEN PRINT "OK
DIRK":SYS49152
40 PRINT"ERROR IN DATA
DICK":END
49152 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32,
186, 255, 169
49160 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213,
255, 162
49168 DATA 25, 189, 40, 192, 157,
96, 1, 202
49176 DATA 16, 247, 162, 6, 189, 66,
192, 157
49184 DATA 156, 8, 202, 16, 247, 76,
32, 8
49152 DATA 120, 162, 2, 189, 119, 1,
157, 245
49200 DATA 69, 202, 16, 247, 76, 1,
68, 169
49208 DATA 165, 141, 229, 15, 76, 0,
12, 76
49216 DATA 111, 1, 165, 10, 240,
250,
76, 96
49224 DATA 1,256
RUN (RETURN)
```

GAUNTLET II

```
100 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245,
169, 27, 141, 208, 8, 169, 58
110 DATA 141, 209, 8, 76, 16, 8, 169,
32, 141, 48, 43, 169, 53, 141
120 DATA 49, 43, 169, 2, 141, 50, 43,
76, 3, 42, 238, 32, 208, 169
130 DATA 155, 141, 17, 208, 169, 96,
141, 231, 154, 96, 0, 0, 0
140 FOR L=528 TO 578 READ
A:POKE L,A:NEXT:POKE157,128
150 SYS528
RUN
```

For intinite energy

MONTY ON THE RUN (Gremlin Graphics)

The survival kit for *Monty On The Run* is as follows: THE ROPE — THE JET PACK — THE PASSPORT — GAS MASK — BOTTLE OF RUM.

SPINDIZZY (Electric Dreams)

Again? Well, shame-faced Gaz had to admit there was a bit of a cock-up with last month's listing. Line 50 should have read:

```
50 DATA 120, 169, 52, 133, 1, 162, 6,
189, 7, 8, 157, 0, 223, 202, 16
```

Sowwy! And thanks to Wayne Moore of Redcar for pointing that out. Anyway exchange is no robbery on the Gob-like and Wayne is well stuck on *Dropzone*, Archer Mclean's old *Defender* clone. Try this Wayne my son:

Type LOAD to load the first part.
Type POKE 1011,248:POKE 1012, 252:RUN and wait for the game to load.
Type: POKE 3060,173 For infinite lives
POKE 14422,255
POKE 2316,255 For infinite strata bombs.
Type SYS 1013 to restart.

FOOTY DIRECTOR (D&H Games)

The very same one that Gaz had never heard of, despite the ad staring him in the face the same issue. The original point of the whole thing was to help out Mr L R Tallboy with the game. Danny King from Northants has sent in a magic sponge in nine easy stages.

1 Load the game as usual. Note the position of the data file "ARRAYS" on the cassette counter. It loads after the main program.
2 Press 1 to save a game file. When the save has started press RUN/STOP
3 If you have a disk type "SAVE"ST",8" or on cassette type "SAVE"ST" "
4 When it's saved switch off then on, reload "ST".
5 List line 2, and change AI to however much cash you want.
6 Type "908 REM"
7 Position the original tape to the beginning of arrays. Type RUN.
8 The program will stop with an error message after loading ARRAYS, so type RUN again.
9 The program should now show the command screen so press B and check your bank balance.

By the way D&H have put a "CASH-CATCH" on the program, line 983 so just put a Rem on the end.

PLEAS

Aaron's a good biblical name so I guess Aaron Gullick's praying for help on *Head Over Heels*. "I have liberated four planets but when I come to liberate Blacktooth, I can't get the Spring of the Ledge." It meant nowt to us, but someone might be able to offer some divine assistance.

D Rochelle has bought *Back To The Future* on budget and can't get anywhere. Any ideas?

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DATABASE EXHIBITIONS



INTO THE VALLEY

by Keith Campbell

LEGEND OF THE SWORD

Rainbird/ Silicon Soft Amiga Price: £24.95

Here is a game of exploration and adventure that has the feel and some of the best features of a role playing game, combined with the puzzles and game format of an adventure. In the making for over two years, its author, Karl Buckingham, gave up his job to write it, knowing that he had something good. Together with Colin Mongadi and Eugene Messina, he formed Silicon Soft, and has come up with a totally new concept in adventure presentation.

You lead a team of six men, chosen by the king to go forth and search out the magic sword and shield that will save the land of Anar from the evil wizard Shuzar. As the adventure starts, your party is about to be landed on the coast near to where the sword and shield are believed to be hidden. There are three places for a possible landing site, and although all the landing points link up, only time and much playing will eventually resolve whether there is one correct beach on which to be set down, for the strategy varies depending upon where you start.

Once ashore, you lead your party against perils from bands of roaming humanoids, viscious trolls, and dangerous monsters lurking in the forest. The forest land, crossed by the occasional river, is riddled with dark and dangerous tunnels, and has its own local castle and dungeon.

The quest tests your stamina to its limits, and to maintain it, you will need to keep a sharp eye out for anything edible — for you will have to keep yourself and your colleagues fed and watered, to be a match for the terrain and its inhabitants. As you proceed, a candle representing your strength, burns lower and lower, only to be replenished after a goodly meal.

The game is played using normal adventure commands, but an icon system allows the player to enter about 80% of these using the computer's mouse. Icons for all directions of movement, are permanently displayed on screen, and many other commands may be entered by touching ACTIONS on the menu bar, and selecting a verb from the list displayed above the fixed icons. Depending upon the verb chosen, further lists relevant to it will then be displayed, and the command entered by clicking on EXECUTE on the menu bar.

Alternatively, the area used to list the word icons can be used to display a graphic map. This unfolds as more locations are visited for the first time, and scrolls smoothly through the window as the player moves. To see a wider view, clicking on the map clears the screen completely, and displays a full-screen version of it, before play is resumed on the default screen.

To the left of the (usual) map are two cameos that constantly change as play proceeds, depicting actions and locations. With fast play, or by using the GOTO command, which takes you to any reachable and previously discovered location, the screen is alive with movement and colour, with changing cameos, scrolling map, and changing highlights showing available exits.

Whilst the parser accepts complex sentences, it isn't quite up to Magnetic Scrolls standards. Nevertheless it is quite adequate for the job once you get used to the way it works. Puzzles there are a'plenty, and SCORE will tell you what percentage of puzzles you have solved. This feature had me worried a bit, though, for often when I had achieved something that left me with a smug grin on my face, SCORE had obviously not classified it as a puzzle!

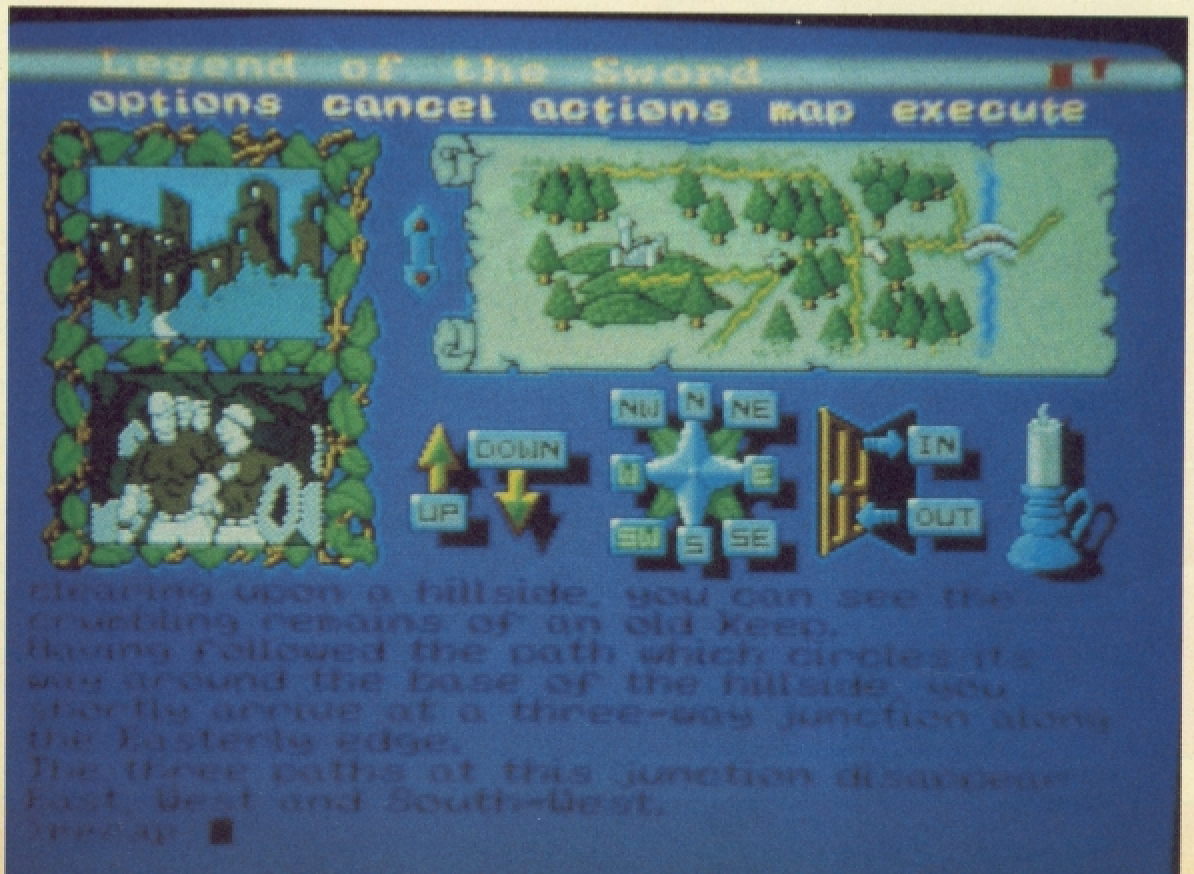
The puzzles are not terribly intricate, but neither are they easy to solve. It pays to LOOK and EXAMINE and SEARCH a lot — in this game SEARCH means something different from EXAMINE! And if you are stuck, there is a good chance that you'll get something useful (never a giveaway, though!) by typing HELP — a feature all too often missing from present day adventures.

There are many alternatives ways to play a given situation, and whilst the way you choose may have so good an outcome that satisfies you that you have done the right thing, don't be fooled for one moment! Try it the other way, just to check it out — an easy task using the RAM SAVE or OOPS option. If you can kill the troll easily, and rob his corpse of valuables, why bother to risk not killing him? And perhaps it really pays not to cover your tracks in the troll's tunnels? A real conundrum this, for I still haven't decided which way to play it. Perhaps things would be easier if I could find the password on the SW side of the mist!

There are very few criticisms that can be levelled against this adventure. There is the odd response that comes from some far distant place and time, but they are very few and far between. There is occasional difficulty with vocab — but as I've already said, it's not so much the words, as the way they are interpreted, and that is fairly easy to adjust to.

The more you play *Legend Of The Sword*, the richer it becomes, as more and more hidden delights are revealed. It is a really splendid game! If you have an Amiga, buy a copy as soon as you spot one!

Rainbird score highly with another superlative adventure.



GRAPHICS	— 8
PUZZLEABILITY	— 9
PLAYABILITY	— 9
VALUE	— 9



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BARD'S TALE 3

INTO THE VALLEY

by Keith Campbell

64/128
Electronic Arts
Price: £14.95
disk

GRAPHICS	— 7
PUZZLEABILITY	— 7
PLAYABILITY	— 8
VALUE	— 8





Mike Pattenden, human? No way . . .

Skara Brae is in ruins following its destruction by the Evil One. You are charged with restoring it to its former glory by seeking out and destroying the Evil One in this the third Bard's Tale adventure.

Being an FRP game, of course, the first thing the player must do is to gather a band of adventurers. Here there is a choice of a ready made party contained on the Character Disk, or the option of creating a set of characters to suit the player. Each character must be assigned a race, sex, and various attributes such as strength, dexterity, intelligence and constitution. The relative value of the attributes is decided by the roll of a dice. If the player does not like the mix, he has the option of trying again.

When sufficient characters have been created they can be saved to disk and then a party of adventurers can be made up by selecting up to seven from those available.

Setting out from the refugee camp in Skara Brae, our brave band now heads into the wilderness to seek out the Evil One. A rather featureless area, the wilderness does have a tavern, a shrine or two, and the ruins of the old city. Set out as a grid of squares, movement is always in the forward direction, using the 'I' key, with direction changes effected by turning through 90° using 'J' and 'L' to turn left and right, respectively. As the party moves, the perspective picture in the graphics window reflects the change of position.

Mapping is aided by hitting '?' when the text window at the top of the screen to the right of the picture informs the player how many paces north south, east or west of the Refugee Camp, the party stands. A difficulty here is that wrap-around is provided, so that if the party moves west of the western boundary it finds itself just inside the eastern boundary, and similarly with north and south.

It's from this small area of Wilderness that you teleport to the seven dimensions in your quest to vanquish the evil God Tarjan. There are seven key locations scattered about, and it's from here that you begin each task that the Review Board sequentially sets you. In the first, for example, you have to find Valerian's Bow and the arrows of life in the dimension of Arboria, which is depicted in the gatefold packaging as a very green place, so obviously you have to teleport from a leafy area.

Monsters confront the party occasionally, who have the option of advancing, fighting or running. A different fight mode can be assigned to each member of the band. Then the fight begins, with a commentary on the battle given in the text window. A successful fight will result in each adventurer getting a share of gold, and possibly a weapon or two.

Initially the monsters are a bit of a push-over. Vipers seem particularly weak, and the only really deadly ones my party encountered were a couple of pumas. However when approaching the ruins of the city and entering the dungeon of the Mad God a whole new set of ferocious beasties appeared and killed my stalwarts off one by one until the sole survivor had little option but to flee. If he could have escaped the dungeon and found a friendly neighbourhood shrine then he might have regained some of his friends by paying for a reincarnation job on them. But then again perhaps they just weren't worth it!

Once mapped, the game becomes a lot easier to play, and can be time-wastingly addictive!

INTO THE VALLEY

by Keith Campbell

CAMPBELL'S COMMENT

Some time ago, I reported that Rainbird were changing the size of their boxes. Marco Andreoli was not amused:

* Really, Rainbird is changing the format of their boxes? They should think about it twice! Are they on the buyer, collector, adventurer's side, or on the Boots (dark) side? If a Ferrari agent has no room in his showroom what happens? Maybe the Ferraris get squatter or shorter? Are they modified to fit the agent's showroom? Who needs Boots, anyway?
Marco Andreoli,
Turin.

Campbell's Comment: Possibly fewer Italians than Brits, Marco! The problem is, not everyone lives within easy reach of a computer games specialist store, so some rely on the big multiples for their software. But in fact, there is no real need for this, since mail-order ads in magazines like CU offer a wide range of titles and often substantial savings to boot! (No pun intended!)

Now, how does Jon Ramsted decide what to buy . . .

* It's the plot that makes me decide to buy a particular adventure! I always have to read the back of the packaging or the inlay before buying anything. After all, it's much more fun to save the world from weird aliens or secret agents than saving your own life by escaping from a sinking submarine, without a second person in the game!

I also like scenarios where you take the place of a famous hero, such as Spiderman or Sherlock. Yes, you read right, I loved Melbourne House's *Sherlock Holmes* game. The reason? The plot, of course! It was very exciting to talk with my friends about different theories. Do not misunderstand me, it is not the best adventure I have played, but it was very good.

Of course, I read your reviews in CU and C+VG, and they sometimes make me buy games I probably would have overlooked, such as *Kayleth*. Finally, I should say your adventure columns are great, but they should be given more pages — I love the Helplines!
Jon Ramsted
Dale i Sfj
Norway.

Campbell's Comment: Once you've chosen, how do you actually obtain your adventures, Jon? Mail order, or are they readily available in Norway?

Talking of plots, who follows the Soaps? David Harrison from Down Under, took the opportunity to ask the following question when he wrote to The Valley about adventures: "Do people over there really watch Neighbours, or is the audience restricted to girls under 16 who don't know any better, like it is over here?"

Campbell's Comment: It seems they do, David! One theory is that it is the perfect escape from the harsh realities of Thatcherism!

And so, with another Valley heading for the printers, there will be no more to write until after my hols. I am making my own escape, this year, to the land of glasnost and perestroika. If I manage to survive the vodka in Moscow and the Crimean wine in Yalta, watch out for me on the EMAP stand at the PC Show, Earls Court, 16-18 September. I'll be the one in the round furry hat! See ya there?

CLUES

DEJA VU:
Shoot at the window to enter Brody's office.

THE PAWN
The dragon is very short sighted. Do two things to draw his attention to an alternative source of food.

SHADOWGATE:
Get a bag of gems from behind the waterfall, and put the white one in the hole by the door in the pedestal room. Use the result to get the key from the skeleton. You can't kill the dragon, but get shield, hammer, helmet, and spear, in that order.

GUILD OF THIEVES:
Rub the horseshoe for luck, then roll fives, and insert dice according to colour, to open the case.

DRACULA:
Lift the rail and then push it, to get through the wardrobe.

SHARD OF INOVAR:
Pick up Inovar on the altar, and then use Inovar in one of the three rituals. Using the right one gets you some help. Decairn is the right one.

FRANKENSTEIN:
Use hemp to plug the leak, then bale it out!

JINXTER:
Look until you see her looking in a suitable place. Then doofer the thingy, make the place ashen, and hide there.

KNIGHT ORC:
Go on to the toll bridge, and make sure you pull the string at exactly the same time as the mouse.

Thanks for the help, to Paul Blaney, Ashington, Northumberland; Julian Loveday, Hornchurch; Michael Newman, Bexleyheath; Stookie, Cardiff; and Ray Smith, Milton Keynes.

VALLEY RESCUE

"Tell Olav Bjoernbakken, that in *Frankenstein* Part 3, he should not mix the two fruits, but smell both and eat the nice one. Save the bad one to feed the cat!" writes Stookie, from Amsterdam. Hang on, Stookie, you were last heard of in Cardiff! "I picked up July's CU on the way to the plane," he explained.

Who can help Antonis Evvipidou, from Limassol, to find the hexagon he needs to defeat Beastman, in *Masters Of the Universe?*

Is there any way to mend the slit in the dinghy, in *Rigel's Revenge*, asks Mark Ferris of Manchester. What slit, Mark? Never noticed it myself!

What's Graham Nielsen doing wrong? He's playing *Valkyrie 17*, (no, nothing wrong with that!) and trying unsuccessfully to use the ski slope. He always gets killed, even though he has the skis and ski poles.

Patrick Grundstrom of Malmo in Sweden, finds himself facing a black door with no handle, in *Dracula*. Who can open it for him?

Help came from many quarters for Beverley Knight, recently stuck in *Shard Of Inovar*. As well as Ray Smith's and Stookie's clues which appear in the clues section, Peter Noack of Waterford in Eire, sent in some tips. At the same time, he asked if anyone can help him to get the *Amulet of Fire*. So far, all he can do is to get buried every time he attempts this feat.

And finally, here's Alen Williams, the adventure assassin from Portsmouth, with the wolves after him! "If you could be a big hunky chunky rufty tufty angel and tell me how the hell I can get past the bloody wolves in *Frankenstein*, I would be grateful for at least as long as a bit of string!" But I couldn't, and so, with halo tarnished, I turn to Valley readers for some help and guidance!

Write to the Valley if you can answer any of the problems mentioned here, if you are stuck, or if you just have something interesting to say about adventures. The address is The Valley, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

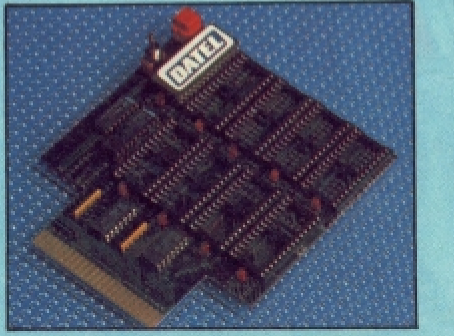

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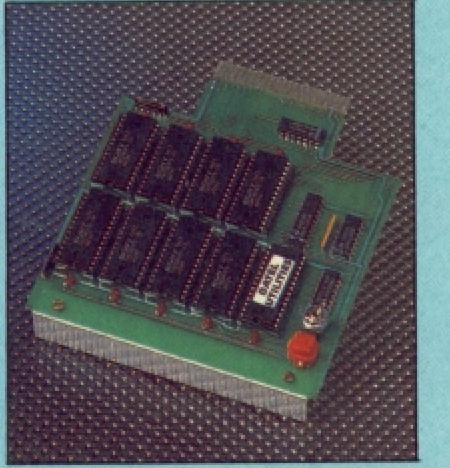
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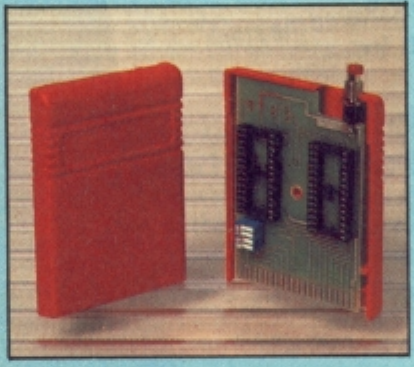
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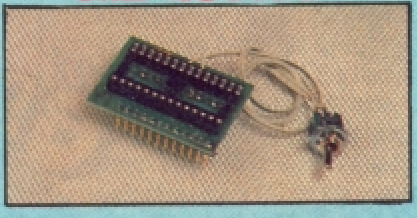
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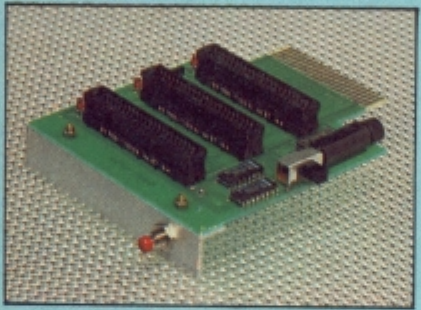
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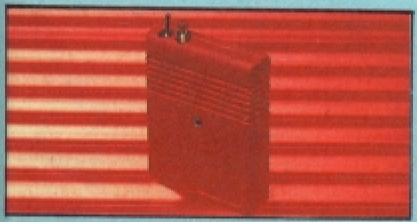
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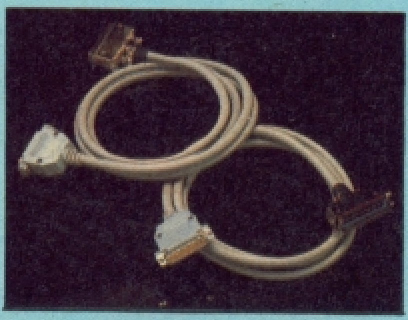
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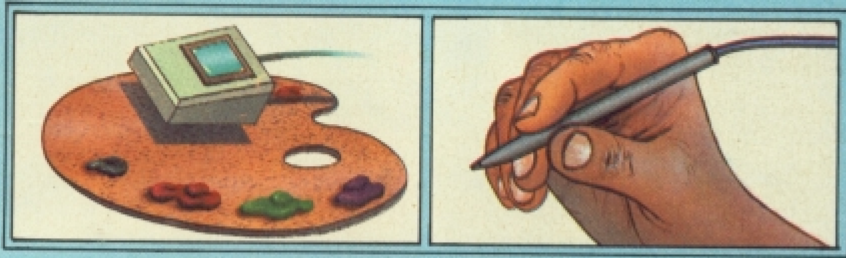


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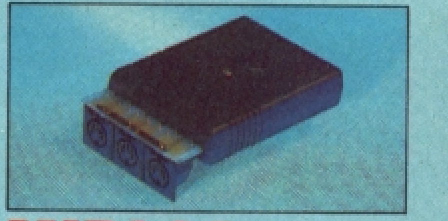
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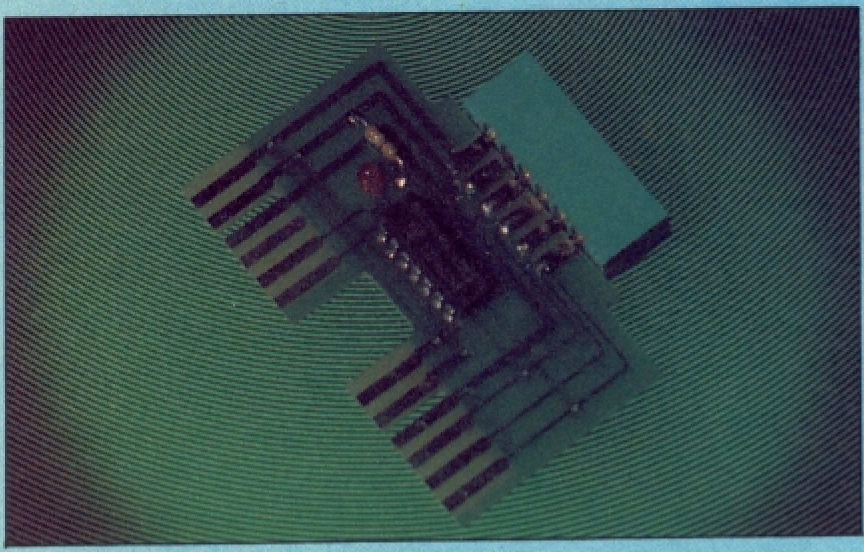
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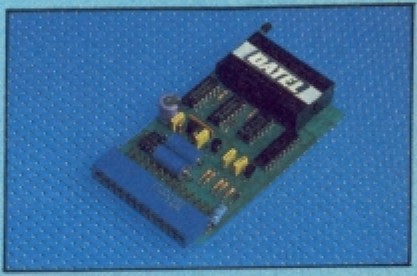
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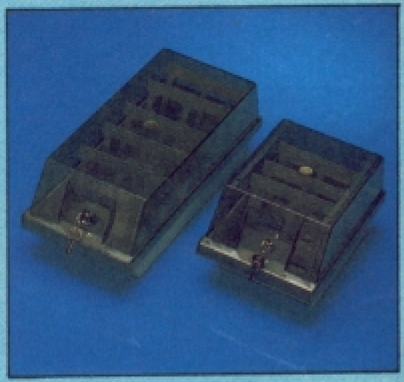
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DEVASTATORS

KONAMI
2 x 10p

If you can imagine a *Commando*-style scenario crossed with straight-ahead *Xybot*-style scrolling, you won't have much difficulty picturing *Devastators*. In fact, you may have even less difficulty than its creators Konami, who obviously were so pleased with their game concept that they couldn't really work up the energy to clothe it with decent graphics.

Actually, the game kicks off OK: a lone figure leaps from an aircraft and parachutes down through extremely pretty clouds. Alas, once you and your optional companion touch ground and go into combat, the scene becomes markedly more blocky and dreary. In the distance stands your mission objective (aircraft hanger, enemy HQ, etc.), usually resembling an unfinished 1960's tower block or a garden shed. In between a host of warriors spring up to confront you, apparently growing up from the ground. As in home computer games like *Leatherneck*, both your bullets and those of the enemy soldiers travel incredibly slowly, allowing you to read them and take evasive action.

Trouble is that instead of popping up in ones and twos, they generally don't appear in groups of less than a dozen.

Apart from your single-shooter, you're equipped with a limited number of grenades which can be usefully lobbed to give yourself a breather when the going gets tough. There are also obstacles behind which both you and your opponents can take temporary, partial cover.

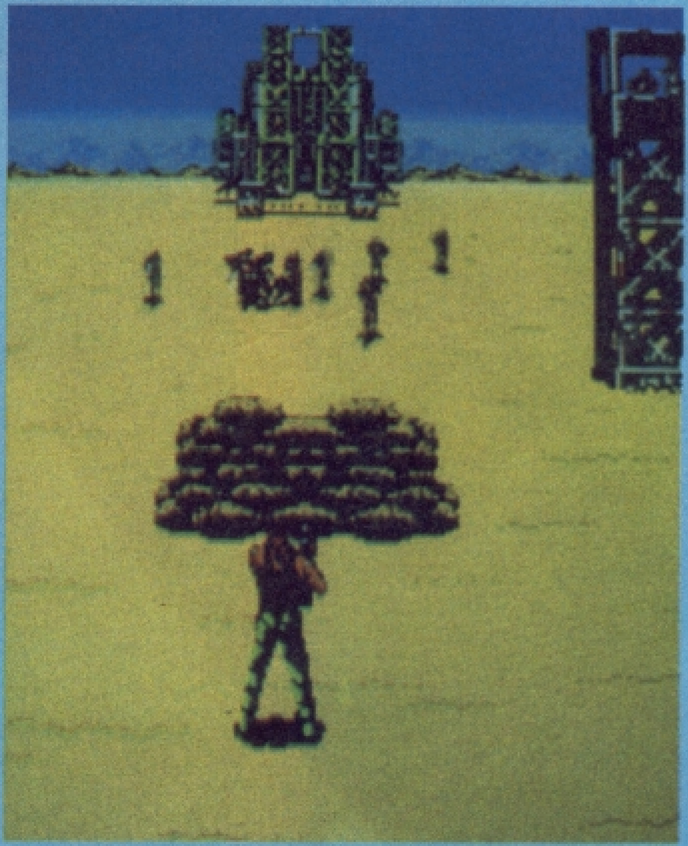
Apart from the various grunts you encounter, there are jeeps, helicopters and observation/gun towers ranged through gamescape. These are not any great problem to deal with, however, once you've managed to shoot one of the soldiers who carries a portable rocket launcher secreted about his clobber. As he expires, he drops this useful piece of equipment on the ground for you to pick up and make free with. Simply get within range, or wait until a target sight appears over the vehicle/installation in question, and hit the special weapon button — hey, presto, the object disappears and a shower of really poorly-drawn debris rains down.

GRAPHICS	4
SOUND	6
TOUGHNESS	5
ENDURANCE	4
CONVERTABILITY	5
OVERALL	4

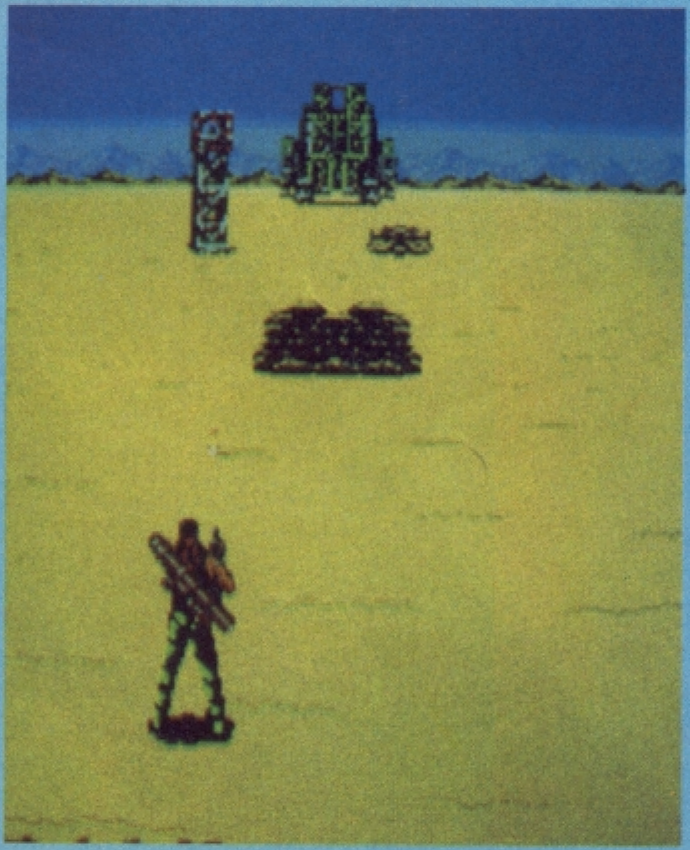


Geronimo!

What a hard case.



You would be too if you had a bazooka.



You can also top up your grenade supply by taking out the appropriate baddie and picking up the ammo box he drops as he dies.

Each mission has a two minute limit for completion, and if you don't keep pushing forward, you're liable to run out of time, and life.

As you progress through the game, you encounter different backgrounds and locations, from airfields, to deserts, to twilit jungles, but the basic idea varies very little. There are all the usual elements we've come to expect, including end-of-level super-meanies (gigantic troop carriers or jets for example, both ridiculously easy to destroy with rocket fire) and a whomping soundtrack (a bit repetitive, perhaps, but not bad at all in comparison to the rest of the game). But it's still very difficult to escape the feeling that Konami just haven't really tried with *Devastators*. The concept of a straight-ahead military blast 'em up is a good one, but the execution here, with dull gameplay, naff graphics and very little overall flair completely lets it down. A little more time at the drawing-board is called for next time round, methinks.

Nick Kelly

ARCA

Yet another Rescue-That-Girl game, Sega's *Altered Beast* is apparently selling like hot cakes and should be all over these isles within a month or two.

It's for one or two players, and you've got five different levels of nastiness to fight through. You each play a lean, loin-clothed warrior with a fair punch and a limited number of special weapons. The landscapes you move through range from ancient ruins to gloomy underground passageways and swamps. At each level you are beset by various beasties and nasties, some roughly animal-like, some distinctly alien.

Each time you succeed in taking out an alien or animal they leave behind a 'Spirit Ball'. Now, these are the key to the game: pick up one and to your amazement you'll notice that you've filled out a bit, and you're stronger and tougher than before. Each spirit ball adds to your physique until you become the kind of guy at whom no-one, but no-one, would even think about kicking sand on a beach.

But you're still not finished growing; for if you manage to beat off your bestial opponents and pick up still more spirit balls, an extraordinary change takes place as you transmute from human into animal, werewolf-style.

The beast that you turn into varies from level to level, and ranges from bear to dragon to great cat, but in each case your normal weapon is beefed up enormously and your special weapon becomes well-nigh invincible. It's at about this stage in each level when the Master Boss himself appears to you, cackles some fiendish imprecation and turns from a small rather wizened man into an enormous, invariably disgusting-looking super-monster. On one level he'll be a living statue spitting forth heads as missiles, on



Oooh! I feel like . . .

ALTERED



Beefy bops a beastie.

The Master Boss sheds heads.



Jeepers, creepers . . .



ADES



another a dish spewing out eyeballs, but whether it's fire or flesh that he's lacing at you, even a beast like yourself won't be able to survive for long without some fairly fancy footwork (agility is increased along with strength as you pick up spirit balls, incidentally) and sustained and accurate blasting to reduce the boss to a smouldering column of ex-matter.

Alas, the successful conclusion of your battle with the level's top meanie doesn't only cut him down to size — you also find your special powers being stripped and you begin the next level the same relatively puny kid you were when you bunged in your initial coinage.

Altered Beast boasts a very nifty concept at its core, and the sheer joy of watching yourself put on the pounds and changing 'American Werewolf in London'-style will doubtless keep you amused and your local arcade owner in large expensive cars. With very pretty graphics and perfectly adequate sound to boot, it's undoubtedly a quality coin-op. My one major quibble would be that once you've mastered the knack of getting through one level, you're not likely to be confounded by the rest to any great extent; though the backdrops change, and you've a different set of opponents — and, of course, a different beast-persona to look forward to — the gameplay really doesn't vary greatly, or increase markedly in toughness.

Still, a clever game, and well worth a few tens of anybody's money.

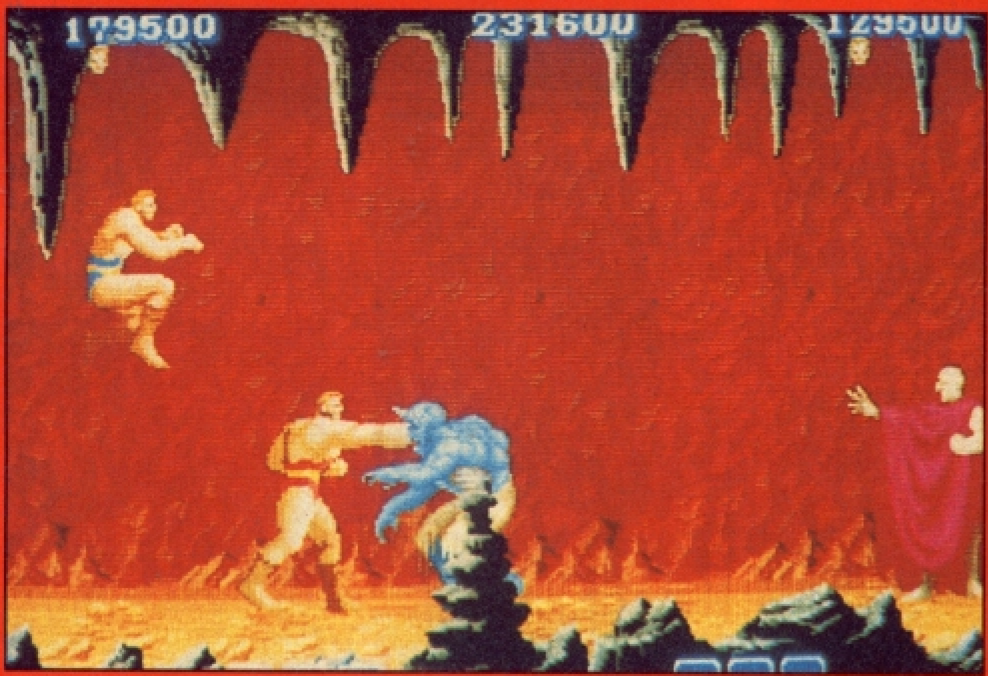
Nick Kelly

. . . a change of face.

BEAST

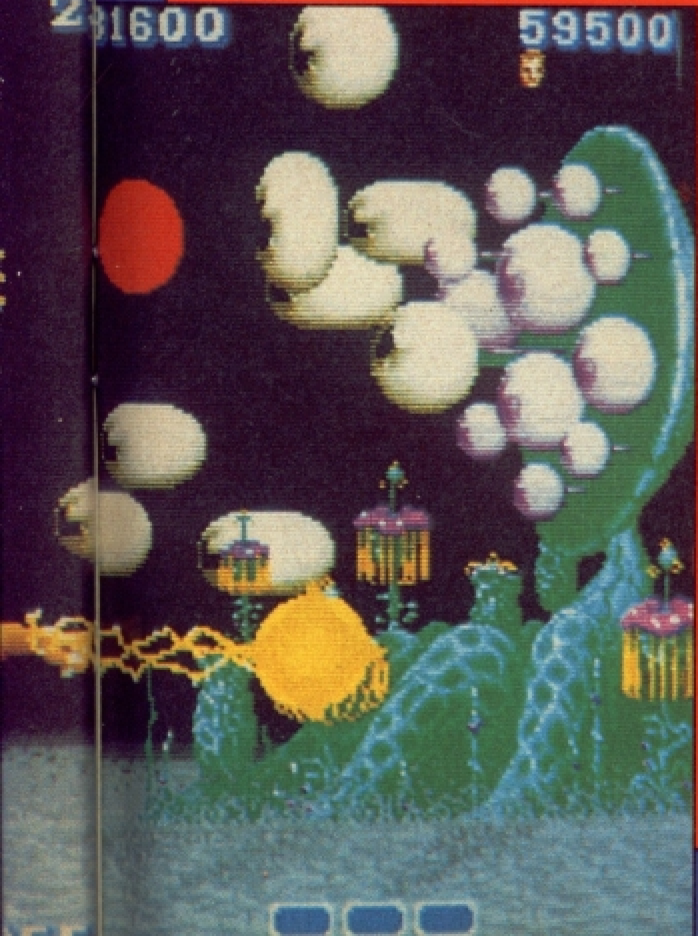
SEGA
2 x 10p

GRAPHICS:	7
SOUND:	6
TOUGHNESS:	6
ENDURANCE:	7
CONVERTABILITY:	7
OVERALL:	7



A subterranean set-to.

A grave situation.





ARCADES

TOOBIN'

ATARI
3 x 10p

GRAPHICS: 7
SOUND: 7
TOUGHNESS: 8
ENDURANCE: 8
CONVERTABILITY: 8
OVERALL: 8



Nope, *Toobin'* is not the name of an ancient Samurai warrior charged with rescuing the sacred vase of Whang Chu from the clutches of an evil warlord. In fact, I can think of few coin-ops with less to do with spaceships, swordsmen, martial arts and armed combat than this latest addition to the Atari portfolio. *Toobin's'* title actually derives from the custom particularly prevalent in the warmer climes of North America, of bumming about watercourses with your bot firmly wedged in an inflated car tyre inner tube (pronounced, of course, "toob").

Toobin' pits you against a mate, or a computer-controlled opponent, in a truly wacky downstream race, each of you using your arms furiously to paddle your toob through gates, over bonuses and point-awarding objects, and out of the path of various sharp obstacles, irate animals and other potentially toob-destructive situations. You've each got three lives, or rather your toob can take three punctures before depositing you at the bottom of the river.

The first point to note is the controls, which consist of five buttons arranged in a pentagon shape. These cover left- and right-hand back paddle, left- and right-hand forward paddle and a fire button. The controls are logically arranged and are surprisingly realistic and easy to master. The fire button, incidentally, only comes into play when you've picked up a few of the coke cans some un-ecologically-minded bounder has tossed into the stream. When confronted by certain baddies and obstacles you can pitch a can at them to remove them, at least temporarily, from the scene.

The river you make your way down is liberally scattered with gates — if you pass through cleanly without touching the sides, you cop the score inscribed on the overhead beam, if you bump against it, the score reduces down. There are also cans to be collected, singly and in clusters, and — very useful — the occasional rubber patch to be picked up, which gives you an extra life.

On the con side, there are numerous obstacles and enemies to contend with. Most frequent, and highly dangerous, are the jagged branches and icebergs which can hole your toob. Then there are the sand bars which slow you down and can potentially expose you to nibbles from pursuing nasties. As for the nasties these range from sea-snakes to alligators, polar bears, fishermen, indians, blow-pipe-wielding Incas, mosquitos, hunters and even an entire flock of penguins who dive in at you from the bank in twos and threes like synchronised swimmers.

The less imposing meanies can be stunned or completely done away with by a well-placed can, but to escape the attentions of an alligator or polar bear you've got to try to move real fast or alternatively pass through the nearest gate.

There are also rapids to shoot (these speed you up, natch) and even the occasional waterfall to be negotiated. The landscapes move from sand, through jungles and forests, to artic scenery, with the obstacles, enemies and even the soundtrack varying appropriately. And, if you want to jump up a level or two, just guide yourself into one of the whirlpools you encounter.

Toobin's' graphics are a laugh, with plenty of funny little details strewn about the downward scrolling field of play. But it's the totally addictive playability that really gets you hooked. When all the giggling's over, this cutesy little game is actually a fairly rigorous challenge, with beginners strongly advised to resist the temptation to speed along until they've got their paddling skill up to a fairly high standard. I don't know who managed to think up the idea, but I'm quite glad they did.

Nick Kelly



Looks like your mate's out to lunch.



Make that gate . . .



Don't p-p-pick up any penguins.



. . . and shoot those rapids.



Looks like you've found a beach party.



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SUPER RANGER

SUNA
3 x 10p

Different name, different company, but one glance at the hitherto-little-heard-of Suna Corporation's latest offering will leave you in no doubt that *Super Ranger*'s primary influence, at least graphically, is that hoary old Atari game, *Rolling Thunder*. Now call me a dessicated millipede if you like, but I *never* liked that naffo *Rolling Thunder* even one little bit, with its stilted movement and exceedingly dreary gameplay, and my heart sank when I noticed the more than passing resemblance in *Super Ranger*. Only my journalistic integrity, and the possibility of my not getting paid if I didn't hand in a review, kept me going.

The game kicks off with a minimalist introduction: you, your mate and an unidentified woman are sitting around a table; a couple of futuristic armour-clad thugs march in and make off with this nameless lovely; and you, naturally, give chase.

The chase leads you into a massive enemy network, divided into several levels and swarming with a variety of baddies — or, to be more accurate, a large number of very similar-looking troops, distinguishable from one another in strength only by the colour of their uniforms. Some require just a single shot to destroy them, others need to be hit twice, and so on. Just learn to recognise the jacket colours and stay alert.

You start out with a limited number of shots in your pistol, so uninhibited blasting is to be discouraged, but you can stock up on ammo and add to your weapon's power by calling into the rooms you come across which bear the gun logo on the door.

Your foes generally shoot at you or attempt to duff you up with their bare hands but there are a couple of 'em who are more heavily armed with grenades and the like.

Apart from your weapon's fire button, your movements are controlled by a joystick which allows you to bend low, jump high and even leap onto balconies, jets, roofs and so on. At least that's the theory: the player movement in general, and the high leap control in particular are sluggish and arbitrary in response. What's more, the animation is of the *Rolling Thunder* school too, exceedingly dull and stylised.

Mind you, as the levels progress you do encounter some rather prettier graphic touches and neater sections. The jet that powers you from the end of Level 1 to the start of Level 2 is really quite nice, and once you get there you encounter a lifts 'n' platforms level which spices up considerably what would otherwise have been a fairly workaday blastalong: basically you have to descend from the entry floor right down to the exit some twelve floors below by getting on and off lifts. Trouble is, no lift takes you the whole way down, so you have to go down a few, then hitch a lift up a couple more storeys to another down lift which will take you further towards the exit, and all the while shooting the myriad roboguards you encounter. Until you get the hang of the swings and roundabouts, this bit can be, as the Boss would say, one step up and two steps back.

Still, a couple of nice touches do not a good coin-op make, and though this isn't quite as naff as it could have been, it's pretty dull fare. I'm not saying that it won't be a big coin-op hit — presumably those of you who liked *Rolling Thunder* will love *Super Ranger*. Then again, you might as well eat dog droppings — after all, twenty billion flies can't be wrong.

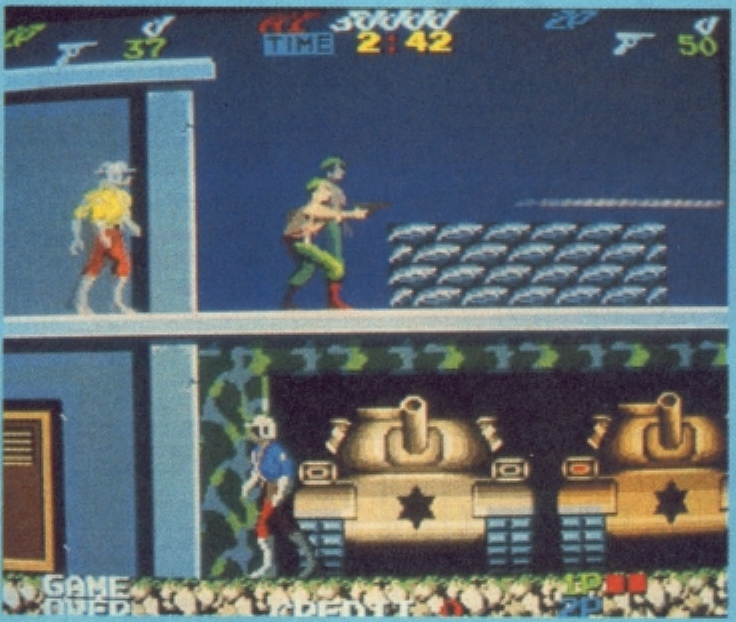
Nick Kelly

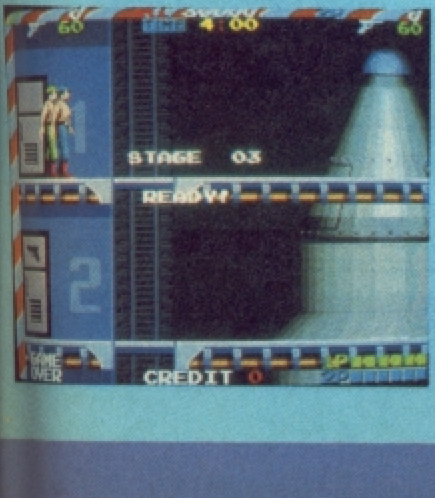


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ENDURANCE:	4
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OVERALL:	4

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TOUGH TACKLING ISSUES

FOOTBALL FANZINES

If you're tired of reading non existent exclusives, scandalmongering and plain misinformation in the tabloids, finding a complete lack of coverage in the serious papers, and want to know more about your team than who's playing at number eight on Saturday, football fanzines could be the answer reckons Mike Pattenden.

These days it seems, there's always someone waiting to take a swipe at our national game. If you listened to the newspapers and politicians you could be forgiven for believing that you'd be lucky to get back from a game alive let alone having enjoyed it. There is an antidote to all the deceit and muckraking in the form of a number of magazines written for and by football fans taking a tough independent line with property speculating chairman, incompetent managers, and organised thugs alike.

Magazines like 'Off the Ball', Scotland's 'The Absolute Game', and 'When Saturday Comes' set out to give the real fans more information, hard facts and most importantly a say in the game which they largely fund. They demand that football supporters be treated like paying spectators, not violent criminals, brainless idiots or cattle.

'Off the Ball', published in the Midlands grabbed attention in issue 11 last year when it carried a picture of Graham Souness' head superimposed over Michael Jackson's body with the headlines BAD. Naturally it concerned some of the Rangers' manager's more unsavoury moments. Subsequent issues have campaigned for a new stadium, reform of ticket distribution for the FA Cup (another scandal) and ground safety. It regularly carries profiles of some of the game's 'personalities' and a profile of a club.

'When Saturday Comes' is London based (just round the corner from the CU office actually) but avoids any so-called big club slobbering over Spurs and Arsenal. Instead it looks all round the country, both up and down the divisions for its inspiration. Like OTB it takes the Football Supporters Association line on many topics and pauses in its witty, sarcastic style only to pour scorn on the machinations of property developers and league chairman. Recent issues have carried send-ups of the league centenary disaster, England (the team) and TV presenters. There's also reports on hooliganism (sane and objective — not encouraging it like the tabloid press) football abroad (including S Africa in July's edition) and a regular feature Great Own Goals Of Our Time.

Both mags cost 40 pence, but you'll have to look around for them in specialist record and bookshops like Sportspages in London's Charing Cross Road because not all the clubs approve of anyone bar themselves discussing the game. This is true also of the burgeoning mass of fanzines based around individual teams. Being independent they offer more than the average programme and often criticise their clubs unmercifully for policy, ground improvements, executive box schemes and, of course, team performance. Like most football fans they're caustic and scathingly funny and they ask questions the clubs don't want to answer. Keep your eyes peeled around the ground before and after the game for people distributing copies. Oh, and make sure you don't end up with a bit of scummy NF propaganda, it does happen...



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Hit The Bar (North-West): 50p from 10 Grafton Street, Blackpool, Lancs.
Off the Ball: 40p from P.O. Box 851, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NB.
Punt (Scotland): 20p from c/o Dickson, 73 Cartside Street, Glasgow G42.
The Absolute Game (Scotland): 40p from Box 99, 26 Glen St. Edinburgh EH3.

CLUBS

The Abbey Rabbit (Cambridge United): 30p from 220 Abbotswold, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6TP.
The Almighty Brian (Forest): 30p from 6 Grays Inn Buildings, Roseberry Avenue, London EC1R 4PH.
An Inperfect Match (Arsenal): 40p from 80 Stapleton Hall Road, London N4 4QA.
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AWOL (Meadowbank): 50p from 66 Broughton Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3SA.
Blue Print (Manchester City): 40p from 9 Lathom Street, Chesham, Bury, Lancs BL9 6LX.
The Chelsea Independent (Chelsea): 20p from P.O. Box 459, London E7.
City Gent (Bradford City): £1.00 (massive issue) from 46 Ainstry Road, Wetherby, LS22 4QS.
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The Web (Queen's Park): 40p from 120 Prospecthill Circus, Glasgow G42 0LW.
The Westender (Coventry City): 35p from Unit 15, Arches Industrial Estate, Spon End, Coventry, CV1 3JQ.
Wise Men Say (Sunderland): 40p from P.O. Box 2, Sunderland SR1 1NG.
When Sunday Comes (Liverpool): 40p from 2 Maybury Court, Shaftesbury Road, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7DT.

NEXT MONTH

IT'S THERE!



The football season will have been going for a month by the time CU's October edition appears. Liverpool'll be languishing at the foot of the First Division and West ham won't have lost a game or conceded a goal. And pigs might fly. What we can say for sure is that we'll be togged up ready to play Sensible Software/ Microprose's *Microsoccer* game. We reckon it's going to be *the* best football game ever.

By then we should also have *Red Storm Rising*, *Double Dragon*, *Virus* and *Space Harrier* on the Amiga. There'll be more information about our free cassette in November and news of a new-look CU too.

It's all happening here so find out how, what, why and where on September 26th.

CU NEXT MONTH

Tommy's Tips

Workbench collapse

I have owned my Amiga 500 for five months and now it has started going wrong. At first the workbench would not blank disks, the countdown for the blanking stops at about 78, almost straight away! Now games stop and the workbench turns itself off. I have two drives and neither of them blank disks. I hope there is a simple solution!
P.S. I have a filter socket.
Reuben Wilkinson,
Harbledown,
Herts

It is possible that there may be a fault with your Workbench disk. You should be using a copy of the Workbench disk supplied with the machine, rather than the original disk itself. If that is the case then re-copy the Workbench disk onto a different disk and try again. If you are using the original then there is no way to test the disk unless you know someone else with an Amiga.

If your dealer is local, the best thing is to take it back and ask him to test it. If the computer is faulty then it will be repaired under warranty, if not then the dealer may be able to replace or recover your Workbench disk. Don't delay, because if you go on making do and there is a fault, it could really pack up just after the machine is out of the warranty period. For everyone with an Amiga who hasn't already done so, take a backup copy of your Workbench disk (and Kickstart disk if applicable) and use the copy for all work on the computer. Put the original in a safe place where it won't get damaged, coffee spilt on it, or sat on by the cat! If you don't already have one of the excellent copiers for the Amiga, get one soon and backup all your programs.

Amiga compatibility

I have, for sometime now, been asking my dad to get me an Amiga, and finally he has started to get interested, but now he is asking some awkward questions. Please can you help?

Here are some questions he has been asking:
1. Does the Amiga use 3½ inch disks, 5¼ inch disks or both?
2. If it takes both do you need separate drives for the different sized disks?
3. If it takes both what size of disk does the software come on?
4. Is the Amiga, IBM compatible?
Simon Coldham,
Gosberton,
Lincs

The Amiga uses 3.5" disks with approximately 800 kbytes capacity when formatted. All software for the Amiga comes on one (or more) of these type of disks. There is no software for the Amiga on 5.25" disks, but there are 5.25" disks which can be fitted to certain Amiga models. This is to permit IBM compatibility where a machine like the A1000, A2000 or A2500 has an IBM bridge-board fitted. This is really an 'IBM computer on a board' which uses the keyboard and monitor of the Amiga. There is a certain amount of data swopping possible between the Amiga and the IBM board, but not programs.

The integrated nature of the A2000 and A2500 means that you have both computers in one compact unit and can run both types of software on the same machine. However, for the A500, at least for the moment, you can forget about IBM compatibility and 5.25" disks.

Colliding with Pacman

I own a C64 and have started writing a *Pacman* style game, however, I have hit upon a problem.

As the background is in ROM graphics I have used the collision register for colliding with walls. I then added the dots and power pills which are also in ROM graphics. I now need a way of checking to see if the sprite is colliding with dots, pills or walls. Is there any way of doing this?

Also, could you please print an example, or explain the basic principle of a software sprite.

Finally, I have often read articles made by programmers who say that they stored about 32 screens of graphics for a game in 64 bytes. How are these screens stored in such a small memory space!

I would be very grateful if you would answer my questions.
Philip Asher,
Bourne,
Lincs

There is no built-in method of determining exactly which background character you have collided with, only that a collision has occurred. You have to incorporate suitable code in the program to ensure that you know the location of all the characters that will be of interest. When a collision occurs, you will know from servicing the interrupt which sprite was involved. Since you know the location of the sprite then you can work out which of the background characters are also occupying the same space. The action you take will then be determined by the type of character found. If more than one character could have caused the collision then you have to make a decision in the program code as to the priority of checking the character types, eg walls, followed by pills, followed by dots. Alternatively, you could decide to allow more than one action to occur if a multiple collision occurs.

As for the software sprites, my definition is 'a group of UDGs, moved together in a block, so as to resemble the movement of a sprite'. It is more complicated than moving a hardware sprite because the computer doesn't handle the blanking of the old position, nor provide a simple way of moving several characters as a single block. This means that your m/code routine is more complex in order to avoid the problem of jerky or ragged movement. However, the principles are identical with moving a single UDG around the screen.

Finally, I would very much like to meet anyone who can store 32 graphics screens in 64 bytes! I know data compression techniques can considerably reduce the 1000 bytes normally needed to hold a screen, but not down to 2 bytes!!! What they might mean is that they stored the attributes which we were used to alter the screens, so as to give the impression of many different screens, but that is definitely not the same as storing the actual screens.

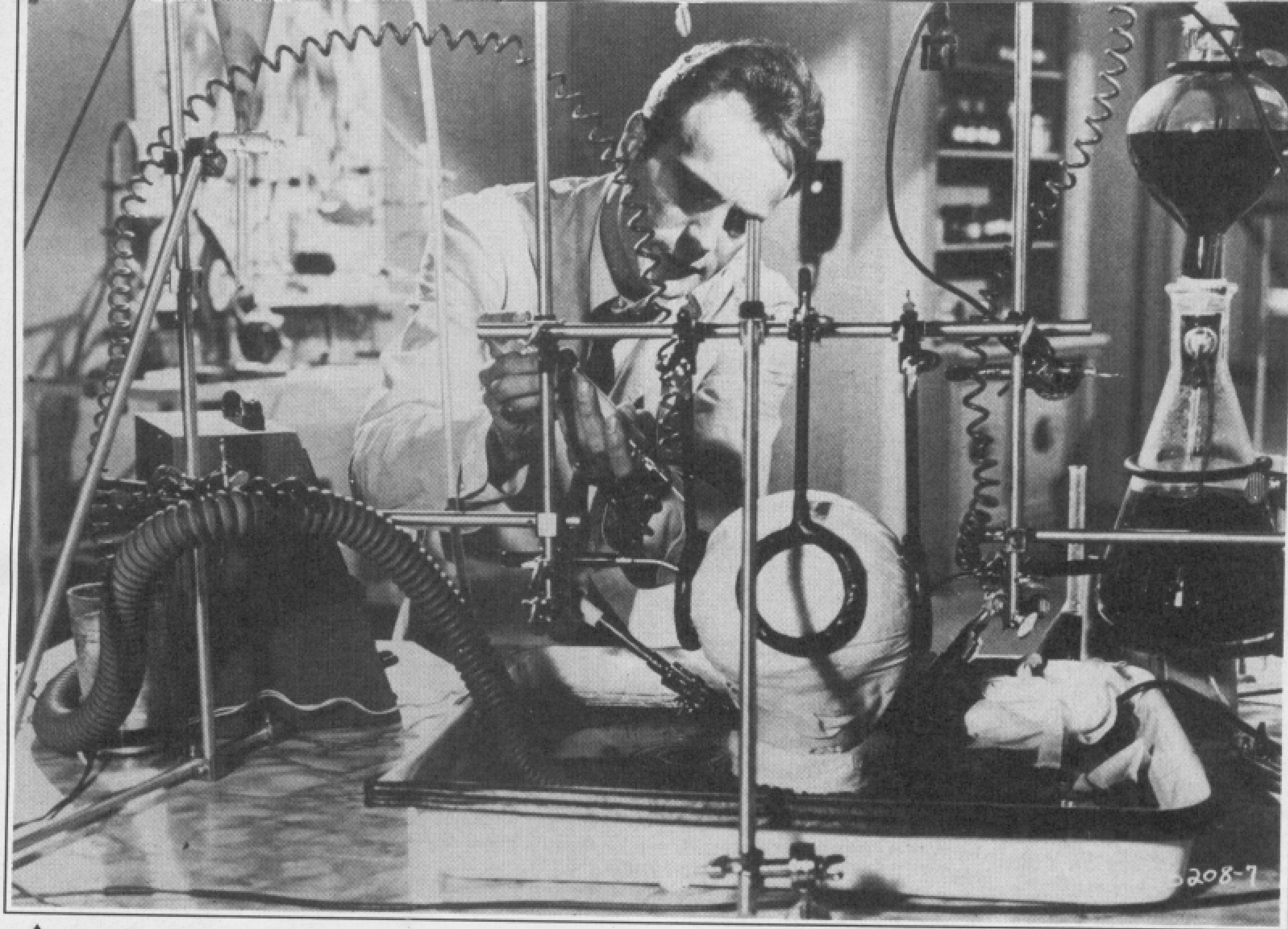
Frogspeak

I have a problem, and I expect every other egghead will laugh at it. I want to program my 64! But I have never been much good at learning foreign languages and the 64 is much harder than French.

Anyway I had almost given up, and along comes the Amiga, wow, ace, wicked, fab, etc. I want one. But here is the question, I want to learn to program, do you suggest I buy an Amiga, and hope it's easier, or, stick with the 64. Either way, just how do you think I should learn to program?
James Duffy,
Coventry

I don't know about programming being more difficult than French. I am hopeless at French, but found no problem learning computer languages (about nine at the last count!). It's basically (no pun intended) a question of aptitude; you either cotton on to the logic of computer programming quickly or you get there only after a long struggle. However, even people who find it easy still have to put in a lot of work in the initial stages and the best way is to take one simple stage at a time.

There are lots of tips to be picked up from the computer magazines. Look at the code of one of the published programs and try to understand how it works. Try some of the examples in the handbook until you understand the logic behind them. The best way to learn to program is with a course. That is the way the professionals do it, but a home study course can be nearly as good. There are several 'teach-yourself' books available for the 64 and it is this machine I would stick with for the moment. The Amiga is more difficult to program as it is a much more complex machine. If you are struggling with the 64, then don't even think about programming the Amiga.



Tommy with his DIY head alignment kit.

A final word of advice; don't try to emulate the professional games programmers with flashy programs and lots of movement. Start on something extremely simple like inputting a name and then including it in a sentence on the screen. Create a single, one colour sprite and move it from the one side of the screen to the other (or even top to bottom). All programs are created using a few simple contructions; loops (FOR & WHILE), conditions (IF THEN), and sequences. If you understand how to use these in a simple program, then it is only a few steps more to using them in a more complex one. Stick with it and you'll be surprised how quickly it will suddenly drop into place.

Active orange

I have recently purchased an Amiga 500, and I was experiencing difficulty in inputting text in my programs. As I have never before used a Commodore machine, I thought it must be my program that was wrong. Therefore, I decided to use a program from a book (Compute's Amiga Programmers Guide) to test the machine. The program was as follows:

```
REM INPUT
PRINT "WHAT IS YOUR NAME?"
INPUT N$
PRINT: PRINT "HELLO"; N$
PRINT
END
```

When the computer reaches the input N$ stage, the cursor appears waiting for input, but whenever I press the keyboard, the screen flashes an orange colour and no input appears. No key press is accepted.

I have also tried programs from the 'Amiga Basic' book supplied with the machine, both for the input and inkey$ commands, but the same thing happens.

I am sure the problem is a simple one, and I hope you will be able to help me.
Mark Johnson,
Woodthorpe,
Notts

This illustrates my point made in another answer that programming the Amiga has more pitfalls than the more mundane machines. Your problem is actually quite simple when you know the solution, but not at all obvious if you don't! If you look at the top border of the screen you are typing (or trying to type) on, you will notice it has wavy stripes. That means it is not the currently active screen. To make it active, and therefore allow your program to work, just move the mouse pointer onto the screen and press the left mouse button. You will notice that the lines at the top of the border are now straight and your program will work quite happily.

It is a point to watch out for whenever you are using Amiga windows; there may be more than one window on the screen and the active one may well be hidden by an inactive one, so look at the top border just to check.

In case you are wondering why you got the orange blink, that's the Amiga's way of telling you it is unable to carry out the action you are attempting. You will have gathered from all this that you can only input text in an active window. Now you know the secret, happy programming.

Everything's gone black

About half a year ago, I purchased a year old C64. It gave me seemingly endless pleasure until a couple of weeks ago, when funny things started happening. I'd be playing a game, and suddenly the screen would go black, and the motor on the C2N whirred round. This happened on most of my games, and later the 64 did this whilst loading in software. Now it doesn't come on at all: (the red light comes on, the motor whirrs round, and the screen is black). At first I thought it might be the power pack, so I borrowed somebody else's, but to no avail. Being rather uninitiated in the workings of a computer, I wondered if you could help me.
Robert Stephens,
Sidmoth,
Devon

This sounds very much like the 6502 processor chip has failed. However, it could also be one of the peripheral supporting devices and it's not possible to be precise without test equipment. What is not in doubt though is that you will need to send it to one of the commercial repair companies to be sorted, as there is nothing you can do on your own. My personnal recommendation is Verran, who do an excellent job for about £20 (but ring them first to check on current prices). You will need to ensure that the computer is well packed, preferably in the original packing, and remember to include the power pack. I know it's heavy, but sometimes it is the power pack which has caused the failure in the first place and there is little point in repairing the symptom, but not the cause. Verran's tel no is 0276 62677.

Tommy's Tips



Well it was going to be an EMAP team photo before that big divvy Ciarann Brennan barged in. Anyway it's our ball and ex-Zzap staff can't play. (Left to right: O'Brennan, Lunchtime O'Lacey, Big Nige Taylor out new adman, Gareth Jones The One's designer, Il Butre — The Ed, Mike P; and squatting, El Tel, Terry Pratt CU's publisher and Mooseman Mark Scriven, now selling The One.)

THE LAST WORD

Well the Ed's nipped out and O'Kelly's just gone on tour with The Fat Lad Whinges to Ireland and TLW is taking advantage of some rare sun out in CU's neatly clipped garden. Trouble is there's this big rock in the way, so if we just lift it out . . . urrrgyagh! What a dirty, disgusting, repulsive slimey piece of gossip. Horrible!

● Hot on the heels of news of an Anti-Sexism Group to combat the portrayal of all sorts of dodgy images in the juvenile world of software comes news of *Sex Vixens from Space*. Just in from America this sizzling bit of softporn follows the ranchy antics of Brad Stallion, pilot of the Big Thruster in his fight for (male) supremacy over the sex-starved female clones of Mondo. Anyone got a paper tissue?

● Which brings us fairly neatly to *Vixen* and the antics of Corinne Russell. 'Seems that the game can't frolic under that title in Germany and has instead had to be renamed *She Fox*. Ironically vixen means something entirely dfferent in German, something to do with self-abuse apparently. Where *is* that tissue!

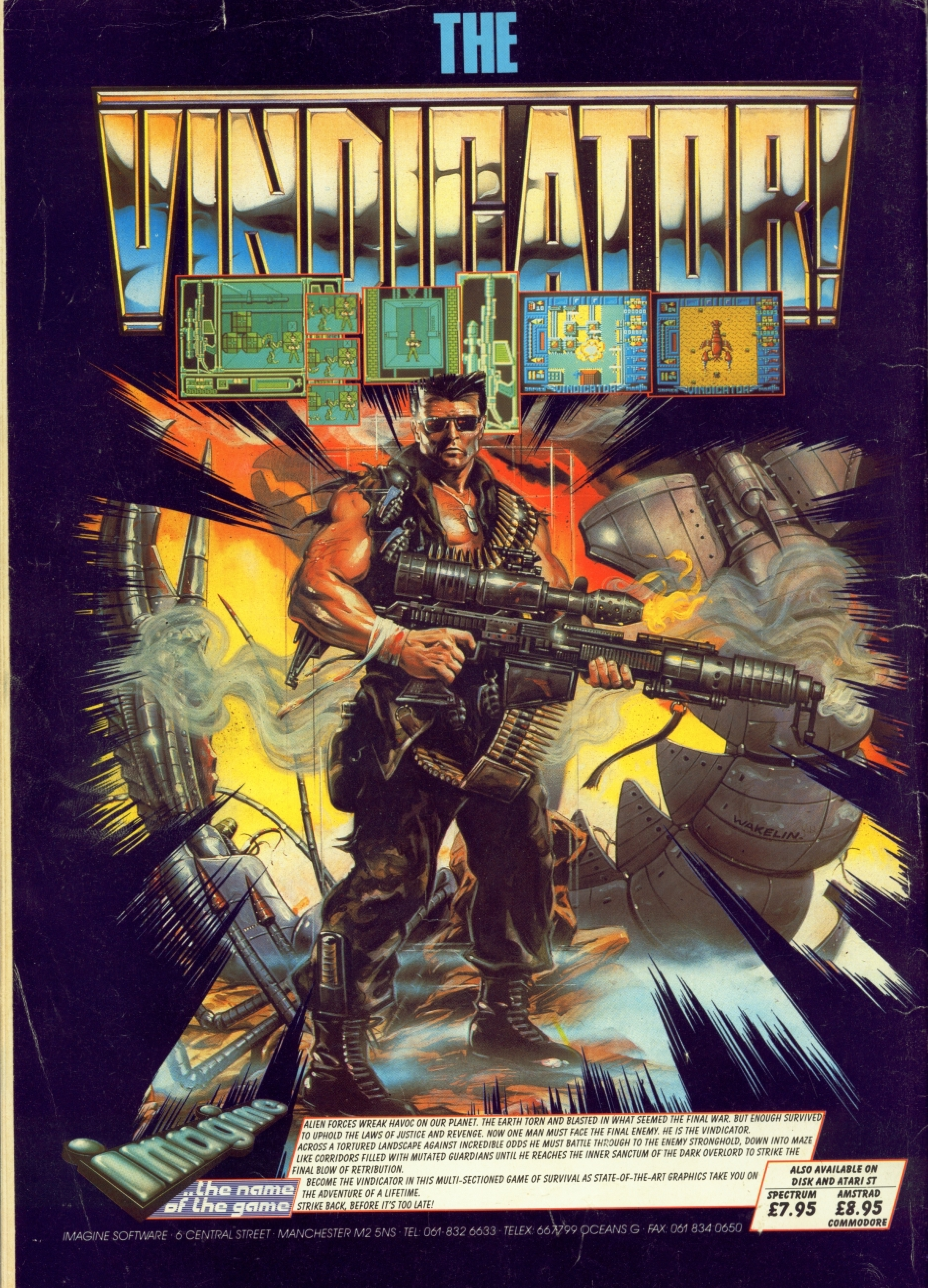
● Not everything is that sordid this month thank heavens, because TLW was beginning to redden in embarrassment. Let's tell you instead the tale of the transforming game. Not the naff robots licence, but the James Bond one. You may remember our preview shot last month of *Aquablast*, Elite's motor boat shoot 'em up. Well it seems to have undergone an amazing transformation and turned into *Live and Let Die!* It turns out that Domark were so horrified by the quality of their effort that they decided drastic action was needed. An ex-member of Elite's staff was on hand to tell them of a game that just might fit the bill. Still what's in a name . . .

● Meanwhile CU has been busy doing good works. Well it's been playing football in fact, but it was for a needy cause. No, not Chelsea, Great Ormond St. *Peter Beardsley* softco Grandslam organized a charity drubbing for a team of journalists by a team of distributors. Fat, unfit and useless, the journos folded up 5-0 mainly because TLW didn't play. In fact only CU and C&VG staff distinguished themselves in an other wise dire team. Rumour has it that Electronic Arts fancy their chances against an EMAP team. When you're ready guys . . .

● Back to the less charitable world of software though for news of another argument brewing over a game. Activision has fallen out with Firebird over *IO* and its uncanny resemblance to *R-Type*. Now it sems they've gotten wind of Rainbow Arts' *Katakis* (reviewed this ish) spotted its similarity to the Irem coin-op and headed straight to their lawyers howling. It was *Katakis'* publishers US Gold, you may remember, who screamed when Elite brought out *Overlander*. Elite it's now confirmed are definitely suing for libel over that one . . .

Well, as the sun slowly descends behind Gary Williams backside, there's no point lying out here any longer. Besides we've got some digging to do . . .


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